

# CAROLINE AT COLLEGE



LELA HORN RICHARDS





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**CAROLINE AT COLLEGE**



By Lela Horn Richards

THEN CAME CAROLINE

CAROLINE AT COLLEGE









Caroline's eyes held an expression that Jimmy cherished  
in his heart for many moons. FRONTISPIECE.

*See page 249.*



# CAROLINE AT COLLEGE

*By*

*Mrs.* LELA (HORN) RICHARDS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

M. L. GREER



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FOR  
ELEANOR







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# CAROLINE AT COLLEGE

## CHAPTER I

### DAY DREAMS

CAROLINE, fourth in Doctor and Mrs. Ravenel's interesting family of girls, closed the roll top to the battered desk that stood between the west windows in the tower room, and softly patted its scarred ribs.

"There," she said with a long-drawn sigh, "there, old friend, I'm done with you for a long while — four years probably; if I am lucky enough to finish college in that time!"

She turned the key in the lock and sat for a moment contemplating the ugly, out-of-date model. "You aren't very handsome," she thought, caressing a disfiguring dent with a slender finger, "but I've adored you. It has been — how long has it been since Major carted you in from the attic to serve my needs and moods? Six — seven — why, it must be eight years. Yes, all of that. Seven years since I wrote those love letters to Jimmy Ludlow on your broad breast. Letters he never saw — fortunately."

She smiled as she turned in the swivel chair and glanced at the sunlit Peak that towered above its fellows in the west.



"Eight years since I first saluted you, Old Man of the Mountain! I remember so well how Major and I climbed the stairs to get this very view of you. Major said it was the altitude that made my heart beat like a trip hammer; but it wasn't. Not altogether. It was your kingly presence. I had never bowed to royalty before."

She left the desk, and sinking down on the cushioned window seat, gazed lovingly at the snow-crowned summit.

"How much you could tell if you could only speak," she whispered, closing her amber eyes dreamily. "How many, many things you have seen pass in your day. Take this old red house of ours —"

She drew her feet under her skirt, planted her elbows upon her knees and let her chin drop in the palms of her hands. Before her half-closed eyes a panorama moved. Sometimes, as the pictures unfolded, she caught her breath in sudden laughter. Often she sighed, and once — tears trickled down the rosy tan of her sunburned cheeks.

For an hour she sat there, oblivious to time and surroundings. She had slipped back — back to her tenth year: happy childhood days spent in the long triangular yard of her old Virginia home.

She was a little girl again, wheedled and coaxed, scolded and petted by old black Maumy who held the reins of government in her fat, capable hands, — and still did, for that matter.

Once again she was the naughty, incorrigible leader in neighborhood mischief. She could see



her old friend and comrade, Willie Boland, aiding and abetting the pranks her quick brain planned and executed: fantastic plays; games romped through; hurried and forbidden excursions to the near-by hills with the McFee children, who were under a neighborhood ban. Social ostracism had always roiled Caroline's democratic heart.

And of course there was the Major, her adored and sympathetic father. She had always called him Major; it was the first word she had lisped — back in her babyhood — way back, at the army post where she was the pet of the regiment, though she scarcely remembered those days. That was before his health had broken and forced his retirement to the old home at the foot of the low Virginia hills.

And there was her handsome, gracious mother, gentle and dignified, who left the family disciplining to her husband, her eldest daughter, Leigh — and Maumi. Caroline could scarcely recall the time when Leigh had not mothered her — kissed away her hurts, bound her bruises, eased her sorrows: dear patient Leigh with face so like an angel's. Perhaps pain had helped mold those features. Leigh was so frail. Her weak spine, slightly curved, had long been a sorrow to the family.

Alison came next in line: Alison, the beauty of the family, who had married Tevis McElroy, one of the richest young men in Virginia — and after her, Mayre, shy and artistic.

Little Hope had followed Caroline, but she was



gone now. A cruel fever had taken her away a few years after the long journey from Virginia to Colorado. It was the memory of that death that brought tears to Caroline's eyes. The wound in her heart had never quite healed.

Caroline's thoughts leaped from the beautiful, though somewhat decadent old home in the South, to the rambling red house that faced the snow-crowned Peak. She remembered so well her first glimpse of the place. Tired and travel-stained, the family had made a pilgrimage from the hotel up the wide, wind-blown street, to gaze upon it. She laughed as she recalled Mayre's abhorrence. Mayre had hated the red paint that adorned the rustic domicile; Mayre's sensitive, artistic soul often rebelled at the incongruous.

It had taken but a few weeks to turn it into a home, however. The quaint old furniture shipped from the South counteracted the questionable architecture, defeated awkward angles. Family portraits gave distinction. In the hall, Great-grandfather Kirtley (Mrs. Ravenel's paternal ancestor) portly and aristocratic, proclaimed the family's gentle blood, and Great-aunt Caroline smiled a winsome greeting to all who passed her friendly niche on the second landing.

Great-aunt Caroline was a tradition. She was the youngest sister of Mrs. Ravenel's father; had married well and taken up her abode in England. Although the family had long lost track of her, she was still spoken of as the generous Aladdin who would some day retrieve the lost Kirtley fortunes.



It had taken some time to make friends in the new surroundings. Mrs. Ravenel's exclusive nature rebelled at chance acquaintances. But gradually the neighbors became known. Charming Mrs. Ludlow across the street; her son Jimmy — a handsome, high-school youth when Caroline first met him. He was interested in Alison then, though he had long since transferred his admiration to the fourth member of the Ravenel brood.

There was also Madame Wakefield and her young nephew, Alfred Feverel. They had arrived and taken up their abode in the stately mansion across the street soon after the Ravenel's advent. Their acquaintance with Doctor Ravenel's family developed through an accident. Caroline had risked her life one day to save Madame's pet dog from the wheels of a speeding automobile. The fact that she was too late did not lessen Madame's appreciation. The pleasant old lady with her rosy apple cheeks and friendly blue eyes — eyes strangely like the Kirtley's — became Caroline's fast friend.

There were other neighbors. The Episcopalian clergyman and his family down the street; the Briggs family next door, rich and uninteresting; Mrs. Mathews and her son, Punny; Blair Newland, Jimmy Ludlow's cousin, who was devoted to Leigh.

Caroline stirred presently and her head lifted. "Daydreams!" she said, waving to the Peak as if to a companion — Caroline always humanized the things she loved. — "and Leigh waiting this min-



ute to help Miss Young with a fitting. Bother dressmaking! I don't know whether I'm altogether crazy about being eighteen and ready for college or not. It means — anticipation, but it also means — renunciation!"

She glanced about the little box-like room regretfully. Then she arose, made sure that the desk was locked, and slipped the key into her pocket. She paused to straighten a book in the tiny shelf that had so long held her favorites and drew the window shades to a self-respecting angle. Mayre was always apologizing for their flighty moods — or rather, Caroline's.

At the door she turned and heaved another sigh.

"Good-by — *everything*," she said huskily. "Good-by until — we meet again. I won't forget you — if you are shabby and scarred and dumb. I love every inch of you."

She closed the door gently and turned toward the sewing room.



## CHAPTER II

### PREPARATIONS

“GETTING ready for college is almost as much fun as getting married,” Caroline remarked, shifting the weight from one tired foot to the other and eyeing the half-finished frocks heaped on the sewing table.

“And no bother about the man,” supplemented Miss Young, who had weathered forty summers very comfortably without one.

“Oh, I shouldn’t mind him in the least,” Caroline flung back, again shifting her position: Miss Young knew how to make pretty frocks but she did keep one standing an unconscionably long time. “Especially if he were the right one — Oh, please mayn’t I have this skirt a little shorter? It’s to dance in, you know, if ever I get an invitation.”

“Not too short, darling,” came Mrs. Ravenel’s patient voice from the window, where she was busy marking her daughter’s linen. “I do not approve of the prevailing length. When I went away to college, I could scarcely get my frocks long enough; they just escaped the ground.”

“But that was thirty years ago, dearest, and



styles do change, you know. Please, Mother — just a couple of inches — a couple of inches doesn't make a scrap of difference, unless it's on one's nose."

"I really think Caroline is right, Mother," interposed Mayre, coming to the rescue. "If Miss Young follows my sketch, she will have the correct length."

Caroline blew a kiss in her sister's direction and bent to whisper something in the dress-maker's ear. Miss Young smiled, but she shook her head. "I think if Mother doesn't mind, we will follow Miss Mayre's directions," she said.

The last weeks of July had been trying ones in the household.

"The University of California hasn't the least conscience about opening its doors in midsummer," Caroline complained. "It means that one has to put in the very hottest weather dress-making. We're all worn out; Miss Young ought to be resting up at Green Mountain Falls this very minute."

"I shan't mind in the least if everything turns out well," the patient little seamstress replied kindly.

"Oh, the gowns are loves, every one of them!" Caroline got out of the yellow chiffon and viewed it tenderly. "Between you and Mayre, I ought to be quite a sensation on the campus. Will the white wool sport suit be done to-day — about four o'clock — or just a little before? I should awfully like to wear it."



“Awfully, dear?”

“Very much, Mother; awfully is an awful word, isn’t it?”

“I hope that you will return from college with a greater respect for English, Caroline; when I attended Briarly Hall in the South, we were taught to choose our words with a view to expressing our meaning. Now, awful —”

“Where were you going, dear, — Oh, I beg your pardon, Mother, I didn’t mean to interrupt —”

“I have an engagement, Mayre, with Jimmy Ludlow. I would like to wear a few of my best things before I leave. Jimmy adores sport suits. We were talking about them yesterday. I should so awfully — so very much — excuse me, Mother — like the brown dinner dress for to-night. It’s just the thing for Muriel’s dance at the Country Club. It’s stunning with the leghorn and yellow buttercups. I reckon that, after all, I am mighty lucky to have a rich sister who now and then sheds her finery. I defy anybody to find a hole in this chiffon —”

“I hope that you won’t find it necessary to tell your new acquaintances at college just how you came by your pretty things,” Mrs. Ravenel said with a sigh.

“I shan’t unless they ask, but you know I hate putting on airs, like Muriel Roach. At the tea yesterday when the girls were talking about suits, she said, ‘Of course, one can never wear a suit more than one season.’ ”

With fluttering eyelids and an irresistible drawl,



Caroline produced Muriel's affected tones. "And I said —"

Mrs. Ravenel looked up quickly.

"I said that if she were fourth in a family of girls, she'd wear whatever she could get, and I told her about that blue serge that was first bought for Alison; then Mayre wore it, and when it got to me, all that had to be done was just take up the seams and dye it, and I wore it for best —"

"Caroline, you did not say that!"

"Surely I did; material as wonderful as that deserves a boost. Is there a ghost of a chance for the white wool to-day?"

"I will help Miss Young," Mayre offered and was rewarded with an ecstatic hug.

Caroline went over to the sewing table and picking up the frocks one by one, examined them lovingly. It was a goodly array; campus serges, tailored and durable; two afternoon gowns smartly made after Mayre's designs; two evening gowns, simple and girlish; the pleated sport skirt with its yellow and white striped jacket (Mayre still insisted upon brown and yellows for Caroline); a soft silky raincoat and silver-topped umbrella with a stunning monogram. Cousin Eliza had sent that.

Caroline moved toward the window where her mother sat stitching. At Mrs. Ravenel's feet stood a deep sewing basket filled with linen and lingerie. Caroline lifted them tenderly, viewing the strips of pale blue linen with "Caroline Ravenel" woven in it. Tears filled her eyes.



Those markers were Leigh's contribution. She had ordered them when the Major first decided that Caroline was to go away to college. And Caroline knew that even so tiny a gift represented self-denial on Leigh's part. How kind they all were to her. She turned and went into the tower room to hide the emotion that swept her.

The desk was open and a sheaf of corrected manuscript lay on the blotting pad. Caroline had worked all summer on a story, with hope of its ultimate acceptance. She barely glanced at the typed pages — Major's old machine had been brought into service — and opening a drawer dropped them in.

For a moment she sat looking out on the Peak, gorgeous in a sapphire shawl shot with sunbeams. Her eyes, clear now and dreamy, were full of memories.

Presently she lifted the faded blotting pad and running her hand back to the very edge, drew forth a note. She was more careful of her correspondence than in the old days, though no one but the Major ever visited the tower.

Slowly she drew the letter from the envelope and read:

"May I call for you a little before four to-day for a drive up the cañon? Since your Western University is no respecter of summer vacations, there will be few opportunities to look down on the world from the top of old Cheyenne.

"As ever,

"JIMMY."



A flush crept from her brown neck to the roots of her sunburned hair. Maumy Rachel had brought her the note early in the morning and waited while she wrote the answer.

“That there butler er footman er what’y’m’call him over at the Ludlows’ done brung hit over and say he was to wait fer an answer, so hurry up, fer I’s e bakin’ this mawnin’, and I ain’t got time to spare while you composes no sentiments.”

The note was quickly written. It contained but one line: “I will be ready; thanks a lot. Lovely day for a ride.” And Maumy went off grinning.

“Don’t you git too pertinacious with Mr. Jimmy,” she called back over her shoulder. “You ain’t never gwine find his like nowhar outside Virginny, and I reckon they’d have to rake the ole Blue Ridge thar.”

She lumbered on down the stairs and Caroline, laughing softly, turned her gaze toward the Peak.

But the laugh soon died. There were moments when it was difficult to stem the hot tide of tears that welled and overflowed. Going away to college was not all joy. Happy as she was, she dreaded the separation,—that last good-by to the Major. Sometimes a thought shot through her brain that left her cold: suppose some day they should send for her suddenly —

She took a quick breath and smiled through her tears. A vivid imagination was not always a blessing, she thought, and hummed a tune to thwart disagreeable suggestions.

When she had closed the desk and waved her



quick salute to the old man in the west, she ran downstairs and knocked lightly on the office door. In response to a cordial "Come in" she put a cheerful face through the door.

"Anybody round here want a hitching post this morning?" she called.

"Can they spare you upstairs, honey?"

"They don't want me, Major. The last time I helped, Mayre had to spend hours ripping. I wasn't born to sew. How many calls have you?"

"Only two, but they are several miles out."

"All right, I'll get my hat."

It was a perfect summer morning. Selah, taking her own gait, ambled lazily down the wide avenue. Caroline settled back against the worn phaëton cushions, and taking off her hat, let the soft wind stray through her hair and over her warm cheeks.

For awhile she did not speak; the Major too was silent. Now and then he cast an affectionate glance at the serious face turned toward the mountains.

Caroline was not conscious of the gaze; thoughts were traveling slowly through her hazy brain. When Caroline dreamed she took her own time, going over details with a lingering fondness. At present she was reviewing the months that followed her eighteenth birthday.

It was in June that her father had decided upon the University of California. Caroline doubted if she would ever forget the morning he called her into the office and laid the plans before her.



“You want to go West,” he said in his abrupt, yet kindly way. “I have decided upon California for several reasons; it has reputation; it is accessible and the climate recommends it. You can live out of doors all winter and study in the sunshine.”

Preparations had begun almost immediately, for, as Jimmy Ludlow said, California was no respecter of summer vacations, opening its doors early in August.

There had been a round of parties after the announcement, and one afternoon in early summer Caroline stood beside her mother, Leigh, and Mayre in the stately drawing-room (the Kirtley furniture and rare old paintings always gave it an atmosphere of dignity) and received friends in the prescribed and formal way of all Southerners.

That had been a proud moment for Caroline. Miss Young had spent many hours over a billowy, white organdy made for the occasion, and friends and neighbors were generous with flowers and favors. It was very exciting to receive the Major's bouquet, tiny rosebuds set in an old-fashioned paper holder. It went so beautifully with the quaint gown copied from a treasured blue satin heirloom of Grandmother Ravenel's.

She had not known that she was almost a replica of that beautiful and distinguished lady of the old South as she stood beside her mother, extending her slim cordial hand in greeting, but the Major, passing through the hall and viewing her unaware, caught his breath and stopped to drink



in the vision. His mother had been a vital force in his life, her memory was deeply enshrined in his heart.

After the reception had come a few weeks of play, teas and dinners, picnics in the cañons; excursions into the mountains, and now and then a scamper on Pinto's shining back with Jimmy Ludlow.

But Jimmy's time was limited, even in the summer. The modest sign painted on an upper window of the National Bank building — "James F. Ludlow, Attorney at Law" — proclaimed him a man of affairs.

Caroline stood a little in awe of him. Most of her acquaintances were boys yet in college. Jimmy's profession, and his mother's proud tales of clients, gave him a herolike aspect as thrilling as it was alienating. She was just a bit afraid of him in his new rôle. He was so often serious and preoccupied when she talked of the latest dance or the frolics of her crowd.

Punny Mathews was her greatest problem. Ever since the night at the Country Club when she had impersonated her timid sister, he had been her shadow. As the summer wore on he became more and more tiresome. In the cool evening dusk, when the family gathered with friends on the broad veranda, Punny arrived early and remained late. At the bare mention of a party his invitation barred others. The situation became unbearable.

He was boresome and garrulous. One after-



noon when he had been particularly obnoxious, Caroline leaned back in the deep veranda chair and proceeded to dream her dreams while he talked.

Her mood irritated him.

“You aren’t turning into a daffodil again, are you?” he asked.

The remark surprised her into a straighter posture.

“What do you mean?”

“You thought you put one over on me that night.” His bantering laugh rang out jarringly. “You didn’t fool me. Mayre wouldn’t have scrapped over the old colored woman as you did —”

Caroline’s answer cut the sentence.

“Your discrimination did you credit. I am only surprised at your keeping the joke to yourself all this time.”

“Oh, I say, now, that’s rather mean; I don’t tell all I know. I leave that to you girls.”

The climax came on his return from a fishing trip a few weeks later. His homecoming was preceded by a telegram which read:

“Arriving this afternoon calling to-night save date.”

It was noticeable that Caroline kept to her room most of the day. When Mayre knocked at her door in the early afternoon there was at first silence, then:

“Sorry I can’t let you in, dear. I am busy doing something.”



“Can’t I help you?”

“No — thanks.”

After dinner, Caroline again hurried upstairs. It was only when Maumy Rachel delivered Mr. Mathews’ card through the partially opened door that she ventured forth. Then she made sure that the hall was clear of curious eyes.

As she entered the drawing-room, Punny rose with a gasp, then came forward, horror in his eyes.

From head to foot Caroline was swathed in black, — solemn, awful black. In her hand she held one of her mother’s black-bordered handkerchiefs which she pressed to her eyes touchingly.

“I am so sorry,” Punny breathed tenderly. “I did not know of your loss. It must have been very sudden.”

“On the contrary, it was expected.”

She took a seat on the edge of a Kirtley heirloom, her hands crossed demurely. Again she raised the dainty wisp of linen.

“I think perhaps you do not quite understand, Punny. My loss has been of time — valuable time. It is your loss too. I am weeping for you as well as for myself —”

For once Punny’s laugh was silenced. In solemn dignity (as befitted the occasion), he walked over to the rosewood piano, took up his hat, fitted it to his head, making sure in his bewilderment that front was front, and made a hasty retreat.

There had been but one shadow on Caroline’s otherwise perfect summer, — the departure of



Madame Wakefield and Alf for England. The great house across the way was strangely silent. Shuttered windows seemed almost an affront when she passed.

Caroline hurried over the memories of the parting with Madame and Alf. She did not care to linger upon them. Tears had glistened in the lovely old eyes of her friend when she kissed her good-by, tears that overflowed and ran down the apple cheeks without shame.

And Alf —

Caroline turned her thoughts away from a certain evening in the upstairs sitting room when she and Alf sat looking at the portrait of his brother, Charles FEVERAL. The subject had turned to a man's devotion.

Color, faint as the bloom of a rose, traveled Caroline's face and neck as she recalled that evening, — a glow that warmed her whole body, and made her clasp her hands in a gesture of despair.

"Oh, dear, why couldn't it have been Mayre," she said aloud, and stopped.

"What's that?" the Major asked, waking from his dreams.

"Nothing — that is — I was thinking out loud, Major. It's a horrid habit. I must curb it at college. Things stir me up. You know — like the night I was so worried about dying."

The Major's laugh mingled with hers. He did recall that night, two years back. There had been rather a long silence at the dinner table, when



suddenly Caroline's sobs rent the air. Startled, he reached over and laid a sympathetic hand upon hers.

"What is the matter?" he asked, alarmed.

"Oh, I don't know what ever's going to become of me — of all of us — when we die!" Caroline agonized, amid the smothered laughter of her family.

"You are not afraid of dying now?" The question came with a slow smile.

"No; I am more afraid of living, at present. The future seems wonderful but a little lonely. I won't have you — Oh, Major," she broke off suddenly, "can you realize that I am going in just three days?"

"Yes, the time is drawing near."

"Is there anything you want to say to me — anything special?"

"The arrangements are all made."

"I don't mean arrangements. Advice."

There was a long pause. When the Major spoke, his words came slowly, thoughtfully, as if they had long lain in his mind, unformed.

"I trust you, Caroline."

It was a simple statement, forceful with meaning. "I shall expect you to hold to the ideals and standards your mother and I have tried to put before you. I hope that you will always be yourself, that you will never be ashamed of an honest conviction, or sell that conviction at the price of popularity. That is all — I think —"

"All, Major? It is everything! I shall try



not to disappoint you. Do we stop here? Selah seems insistent."

The subject was not renewed when the Major returned from his call. Caroline, aroused from her dreams, was bright and chatty, and they reached home in the best of spirits.



## CHAPTER III

### A DEFERRED APPOINTMENT

IT was exactly fifteen minutes before four when Jimmy Ludlow, handsome and immaculate in his white flannels, stepped from his smart runabout and rang the bell at the Ravenel residence.

"Miss Caroline," he said to Maumy Rachel, who opened the door, "is she ready? We have an engagement."

"Ready, Mr. Jimmy! Don't y'all know girls ain't never ready on time; but I's gwine see fer you."

She plodded up the stairs, looking back now and then to meet Jimmy's amused eyes. Presently Caroline's sweet Southern drawl floated down.

"You said a little before four, Jimmy; twenty minutes is a lot. But I'll forgive you, and hurry."

The vision that greeted him some minutes later must have recompensed him for the wait, for a glow came into his eyes and a smile puckered into a low whistle.

"Great! I suppose it was the new frock that took the extra time, but it was worth it!"

"Yes, Mayre had to put in the last stitches; I am glad you like it. I wanted you to see some of



the new things; goodness knows you've had enough of the old."

"Don't you know you always look well to me, Caroline?"

Something in his tone made Caroline start. She met his glance shyly.

"Thank you, Mr. Lawyer," she laughed. "You're mighty nice, too. I adore white flannels."

Jimmy's eyes followed her as she walked before him to the car. The white kilted skirt, several inches above the low white oxfords (before the day of the ultra short skirt), the dainty, frilled waist and smart belted jacket belonged distinctly to Caroline's type. Jimmy was not slow to recognize the fact. They were soon out on the highway, skimming over the white sandy road that skirted old Cheyenne.

Jimmy was preoccupied.

"Oh, but it's heavenly to-day," Caroline remarked, securing her hat with an extra pin.

The conversation was at first banal. Jimmy answered Caroline's questions in monosyllables. It was after they had left the machine at the toll-gate and started up the crooked, woodsy path that led to the summit of the mountain that he shook off the mood that had possessed him.

"So you are leaving Friday?" he ventured.

"Yes, Friday."

"I suppose you are glad?"

"Very — that is — with reservations."

"And those?"



“Leaving my family — and friends.”

They had reached the top and were standing on a prominence that overlooked the valley.

“And all *that*,” Caroline said, including the panorama. “You don’t know how I love it; the plains off there and the mountains. The mesa —”

At the word Jimmy turned and looked into her tawny eyes.

“Yes, the mesa,” he said slowly. “I wanted to speak about the mesa.”

Caroline dropped down on the ground and, gathering a handful of bluebells, arranged them with care and deliberation.

“I am afraid,” Jimmy went on, “that we shall have to call off our engagement for September the eighteenth since — since your university is so keen about opening in August.”

“Yes, I thought of that.”

“It will be but a postponement.”

“Yes.”

“Perhaps that is best, anyway, for a couple of years.”

Caroline nodded as she reached for a bunch of June grass. For two years, she agreed.

“Perhaps we ought to make it July. You won’t be here in August.”

“Probably not.”

“All right. We’ll change the date —”

“Oh, no, please —”

“Why not?”

“Because — well — because the eighteenth is so



settled in my mind. I have thought of it for so long."

"Have you, Caroline?"

"Oh, heaps, Jimmy."

"But you won't be here in August —"

"Who knows; leave it, anyway."

She held up the bouquet for inspection. "Get me some columbines, won't you, please. Over there. Major loves them. I want some for the office."

He was scarcely back when she looked up in dismay. "Why, it is raining," she cried. "I felt a drop on my cheek — one of those big ones that mean mischief!"

Jimmy pulled her from her low seat quickly.

"We must hurry," he said. "Lightning is terrific in these pines."

Down the crooked little path they went in haste, Jimmy ahead, Caroline slipping and sliding, holding to his outstretched hand, laughing at his anxiety.

"I'd adore staying right up here and daring the old man," she said, shaking her free hand toward the Peak, "only for my new suit."

The shower was coming down briskly when they reached the cabin at the tollgate; the keeper came out to greet them.

"Better shinny in here quick," he urged hospitably; "looks to me like a cloudburst."

For fifteen minutes the rain pelted and beat against the tiny log house; thunder crashed and the wind blew, lashing the pines with fury. Then,



suddenly as it had begun, the storm ceased. Clouds parted and the blue sky smiled. The sun peeped through.

"These rumpuses always make me think of people who storm and fuss and the next minute forget what it's all about," Caroline laughed, picking her way daintily to the car. "There's something so childish about Colorado's moods. She sputters and fumes — and loves you all the while."

Jimmy opened his mouth to speak, but he held back the words. Instead, he bundled her into a motor coat and tried awkwardly to fasten it.

Caroline found the evasive buttonhole and looked up saucily.

"Nice old stupid!" she remarked, with a little moue. "Men never can button things — they always go at it right-handed. I was telling Major just the other day that there were two things men never will understand: why women's clothes button to the left, and the use of a hairpin in the household."

"A hairpin?"

"Yes; a hairpin is as good as a set of tools if one knows how to use it; it buttons shoes, cleans finger nails in emergency; opens letters; holds on buttons; runs ribbon in things — to say nothing of its natural uses. I've always thought a monument ought to be raised to the person who invented it; perhaps sometime I'll undertake it."

She was running on a bit garrulously, and with definite purpose, Jimmy thought, giving her a



side glance as he knotted a yellow scarf about her throat, pulling out the loops with exaggerated care.

The mesa was not mentioned again. Afterward, when she was alone in her room, Caroline fancied that they had both been rather eager to avoid it. She didn't quite know why.

It was later that night when they were dancing together at the Country Club that they paused for a moment, straying out on the half-deserted veranda. The music followed them with a wave of sadness.

"I wish that violinist wouldn't wail so," Caroline said between a laugh and a sigh. "It makes me homesick. Did you ever hear of any one being homesick before leaving home, Jimmy?"

"Oh, yes, it can be done," he answered, as if his thoughts were miles away.

"It's a horrid feeling."

"I hope it stays with you."

"Oh, Jimmy!"

"I don't want you to be unhappy. I merely wish —"

He stopped suddenly.

There was a whole minute's pause, then:

"What do you wish, Jimmy?"

"Everything that counts for your happiness. Shall we finish now? You once liked to dance with me."

"Once!"

"Do you remember what you said to me that night — years ago — I have always carried



around a vision of a little girl with a patch on her nose."

"Jimmy, please —"

"You said — tell me what you said, Caroline. You can't have forgotten."

"That I could almost die dancing with you — what a limb of Satan I was. Maumy was furious. She scarcely spoke to me for a week; said I was trying to capture Alison's beaux. Oh, Jimmy, I am so sorry — this is Jorden Fielding's one-step. Here he comes."

"Are all your dances taken?"

"I am afraid they are."

"Good night."

"You are not going, really?"

"Really."

"I'll see you to-morrow."

"Probably."

A moment later, keeping up with Jorden's long college stride, she heard Jimmy's motor chugging in the driveway and knew that he had gone.

And Jimmy, skimming over the country road at an alarming pace, appeased his conscience with a manly defense: it wouldn't have been fair.

Over and over again the word burned itself into his heart — fair.

For above everything else Jimmy Ludlow's character pivoted on that: fairness. It had won the respect of his classmates at college. Put it up to Ludlow, they said, when there was need of an important decision. He's fair.

There was a light under Leigh's door (for all it



was past midnight) when Caroline returned home.

Leigh, having stood in the place of mother to Caroline ever since Caroline could remember, always waited to indulge in the breezy gossip that takes place in the wee small hours of the morning, — when the house boasts a *débutante*.

To-night she had slipped on a comfortable rose-colored negligée and thrown herself on the couch to await Caroline's coming. The room with its softly shaded light was cool and inviting. Caroline stooped and kissed her sister's expectant cheek before she threw off her wrap.

"Dearest!" she exclaimed, sitting down beside her. "Why do you wait up like this? It isn't at all necessary."

"I wouldn't miss hearing about the party for anything."

"Was Blair here?"

"Yes, until eleven."

"The dear!"

"I am so glad you love him, Caroline."

"I adore him."

"Did you have a wonderful time?"

"Fine."

"Were the gowns pretty?"

"Some."

"Whom did you dance with — most?"

It was the same loving interest that had gone on all summer. And after the details:

"I'm starving, Leigh. It was one of those cake-and-punch affairs. Would Maumy be furious if we raided the pantry?"



"I made some sandwiches for you, dear. We'll have them together."

"You darling! I'll run down and bring them up."

As they ate they chatted; Leigh had almost finished Caroline's packing; Miss Young had done splendidly with the frocks, they were quite ready; Mayre had filled a surprise box that was at the very bottom of the trunk and was not to be opened until Caroline was settled in her boarding house.

Caroline listened in a dream; it was all so exciting.

"And there was a letter from Alison this afternoon," Leigh finished. "It is there on my desk."

Caroline opened it listlessly.

"The last half is for you, dear."

Caroline turned the letter over and read aloud:

"So our precious Caroline has grown up enough to go to college; dear me, it seems only yesterday that she was an infant following me about, borrowing my things and copying my clothes. Tell the dear child that I really wanted to send her something to take away with her, but I have been so busy that I couldn't seem to find a minute; there has been so much entertaining, and of course, in my position, I have my responsibilities. But I will have Abbie look over some of my (a word — it looked very much like "old" had been scratched out and "summer" substituted) things, and send them on to her. I understand that it is always warm in California and she could wear them there."



"She needn't bother," Caroline flung and her face flushed.

"But, dear, remember how lovely Alison's things are; the chiffon she sent."

"I know — I don't mind the things; it's her everlasting condescension, her high-and-mighty attitude. Leigh, sometimes I almost hate Alison — I mean — don't scold until I explain — I mean I hate the things she stands for: uselessness, selfishness —"

"But she has her charities. You know she wrote they had made her chairman of the hospital committee —"

"Yes, and what did she say — that it really didn't take as much time as one would suppose, she had appointed such fine workers; that Tevis insisted upon her subscribing largely. Subscribing!" Caroline's scorn filled the room. "What's writing a check! Anybody can do that who has a bank account."

"By the way, there's a letter from Tevis for you; I put it on your dressing table. Good night; run along now. You need your rest, and so do I."

Caroline had made herself comfortable in slippers and kimono before she broke the seal of Tevis McElroy's letter. It was brief, but the contents brought a smile to her lips.

"Dear little Sister," it began. (Somehow Tevis always seemed closer than Alison.) "Alison tells me that you are off for California in a few days. Fine! We hope that you will have a



splendid year, but that you will seek your Alma Mater in the East. Two years West, and two East, would be about right, don't you think? Alison has been so engaged for the past month with her various social functions that she tells me she has not found the time to send you anything for that glory box that accompanies every girl to college (having had sisters, I know), so I am enclosing a check. Please buy something you very much want, from both of us, and believe us more interested in your welfare than our silence would imply."

Caroline opened the check wonderingly. The amount startled her: fifty dollars. Fifty dollars meant nothing to a millionaire, but to her, who had never in her life possessed more than ten dollars at a time, it seemed a fortune.

She pattered across the hall and laid the pink slip in Leigh's hand.

"And to think I was just scorning checks!" she apologized. "Words are regular boomerangs, aren't they? They fly straight back and hit you. Good night. I'm off this time. Sweet dreams."



## CHAPTER IV

### CAROLINE DEPARTS

SAYING good-by was all that Caroline anticipated — and more. She met the Major in the hall when she came down to breakfast and it seemed to her that his kiss was a little tenderer, his eyes more wistful.

Maumy hovered over her at the table, proffering waffles and honey, talking the while in short monosyllables.

“Y’all mus’ eat; good Lord knows when y’ll git waffles again; I made these here hermits ’special, Missy.”

“But I can’t eat cake for breakfast, Maumy.”

“ ’Cose not, ’cose not, but these here ain’t cakes, they’s cookies; they’s a heap a difference; they goes good with coffee; an’ let Maumy run git you some more cream fer yer apple.”

Mrs. Ravenel smiled through a mist of tears.

“Humor Maumy, if you can, dear; she’s old, you know, and a little childish. She is afraid you will not be properly nourished at college.”

Caroline was glad when the time came to depart; the strain was almost more than she could bear. There was a brief ten minutes with Major in the



office just before lunch, in which he had given her the particulars of her journey, and handed over her tickets with the remark:

“Upon arrival, you will go straight to your hotel where a room awaits you. The next morning you will see the dean of women and get a list of desirable boarding places.”

“I understand perfectly, Major, I am so grateful to you for letting me make my own arrangements; it simplifies everything.”

Mrs. Ravenel's instructions took longer.

“I wish that your father had permitted some one to go with you, darling,” she said anxiously. “I do not like your traveling alone. I hope you realize how very necessary it is to be cautious in traveling; you must never speak to strange men, or permit them to address you. I remember a most annoying experience I once had as a young girl going to Richmond —”

“Yes, Mother dear, I know. Please don't worry.”

“And your tickets, Caroline; it is so unsafe to leave them in a handbag, though of course they will be taken up soon after you start; the system is improved in that way. When I used to travel —”

“I know, dearest.”

“And your money; it is very unwise to keep it all in one place.”

“Major has given me express checks.”

“I am not sure that is the best thing to do. Suppose you should lose them? What would you do, my dear child?”



"I am not counting on losing them, Mother."

"I think it would be wise to pin some money on you."

"I have done that."

"There is one thing more."

"Yes?"

"You are a Kirtley. Always remember that. The name carries obligation. For generations it has remained unstained —"

"Mercy, Mother, you don't think I am going to disgrace it?"

"No, Caroline; but you must choose your friends with care. Association means so much. My father, Captain Kirtley, a wise and just man, used often to say, 'We must not only avoid evil, but we must avoid the *appearance* of it.'"

"I know; you have told me that many times."

"You are too young to know how blessed you are in your inheritance, darling, or what you yourself owe to posterity."

It was hard, too, to say good-by to Mayre; looking back down the years of their Colorado childhood, there had not been a night's separation, though since Alison's departure, Caroline had moved across the hall and Mayre had made the old room over into a cozy studio.

It was an attractive place with sketches and easel, the colors blending and deepening to a vivid sea-blue; Mayre, picturesque in a bright orange smock, was quite as attractive as her surroundings.



"I reckon it is about time to go," Caroline said, finding Mayre absorbed in a drawing. Work was always Mayre's panacea for depression.

"So you are really off!" Mayre answered, and coaxed a smile to her trembling lips.

"You are going to the station! Mrs. Ludlow sent over the car. Hurry, please."

Caroline scurried on to the kitchen to throw herself into Maumy's outstretched arms. Maumy, as usual, had risen to the occasion.

"I ain't gwine shed no tears, lil Miss No-Count," she said, "no, ma'am. This here ole kitchen's gwine to know the first peace hit's known since we moved in. Ain't nobody gwine empty my cooky jar — er cut into my fresh cake —"

"No — Caroline's going — exit the devil!"

The bubbling laugh filled the kitchen.

"Seem lak de debil he's been on a vacation long time now; once in awhile a little mule he creep in to take his place —"

"Oh, Maumy!"

"But he don't stay long; you gwine writ me from out thar, honey?"

"Of course I am: reams!"

"What's reams?"

"Heaps of pages."

"All right; g'long now; I ain't got time to bother no more."

Maumy lifted her apron and made a pretense of shooing Caroline from the kitchen, but Caroline knew that the chuckling laugh was half a sob, the apron raised to hide tears.



Her own eyes smarted as she ran down the front steps to the waiting car.

There was little time at the station for farewells. After Caroline was in the train she had a hazy vision of the Major's pale face and kindly smile; her mother's tears, shed behind a dainty lace handkerchief; of Leigh's and Mayre's kisses blown from the station house, of Jimmy's gift of candy and roses.

Then it all faded in a misty blur. She settled back in her seat and for a brief moment gave way to the emotion that battled in her breast.

And at home:

Dinner was a sad failure. Caroline's chair, pushed under her accustomed place at the table, had a mournful air. Maumy's flakey biscuits and tempting roast went back to the kitchen almost untouched.

"Seem lak," Maumy said to the stableboy who had come on from Virginia to care for the grounds and Selah, "seem lak some gret big hand reach'n out and turn off all the light in this here ole house; yes'er. Little Miss's smile and that giggle o' hern lit up the whole place. I wish she war back — debil and all!"

The Major must have had much the same thought as he climbed the stairs to the tower room and closed the door upon the household. The place was in perfect order, a mute testimony to Caroline's flight from childhood to womanhood. Before, its general state had been one of mild eruption. Now the desk was locked, the top swept



clean of ornament. The erstwhile motto and Jimmy's dust-begrimed notice of an appointment lay at the bottom of the deepest drawer; books were carefully arranged in the neat case that ran between the south windows. The telescope, head down, had as dejected an air as Caroline's chair at the table.

There was a deserted, forsaken atmosphere about everything.

The Major's eyes traveled over each familiar object caressingly. Slowly the fact that Caroline had passed the borderland of little girlhood faced him. No more that mischievous, sunny face would turn from the battered desk at his knock; no longer, hand in hand, would they watch the sun sink behind the peak, leaving the old king bathed in splendor. Gone were the long tramps in the hills,—those confidential visits behind Selah, when she played "hitching post." Caroline would only come home to visit, now—and with the stamp of maidenhood upon her. Life, unyielding, indomitable, had put its world-old period after childhood.

It was hours later that Leigh, needing her father on an important case, found him in the fast purpling twilight, his head bowed in his hands.



## CHAPTER V

### CALIFORNIA

THE trip was long and tiresome; but Caroline, reacting from fatigue with the invigorating ocean breeze that welcomed her on the coast, alighted from the train calm and expectant.

According to instruction, she immediately telephoned to the hotel to see if the reservation had been held for her. It had, so, inquiring her way by street car, she set forth.

One of Doctor Ravenel's patients had recommended a quiet family hostelry, frequented by elderly people who had come to make California their home, and patronized also by a number of college students. Altogether a desirable and reputable place.

It was a new experience to register, and then follow a pleasant-faced colored lad to the room above. It was not until he had put down her bags and wheeled in her trunk that a wave of loneliness crept over Caroline.

She opened her closet door, took off her wraps, and hung them away neatly. Then she sat down in the old-fashioned, comfortable rocker placed



near the window and looked about. Her eyes swept the room, square and shabby, yet withal comfortable.

"I am so glad I have to stay here, and not Mayre," she sighed, taking in the ugly red wall paper that paled to a dusky pink as it climbed to a yellow ceiling; "it would drive her frantic." The red carpet, clean, but much the worse for wear, took on the same bold tones; even the red curtain that sheltered the basin with its hot and cold water might have been dipped in the blood of many martyrs, so crimson was its hue.

"Oh, well, what difference does furnishing make," Caroline thought, heaving a homesick sigh and winking back smarting tears. "I won't be here more than a week or two."

She got up and taking her clothing from the suitcase, opened the drawers of the scarred oak bureau and laid away her blouses and linen. When she had finished she opened her trunk — the clumsy old leather ark that her mother had carried away to Briarly thirty years before — and got out her campus frocks and coats. When she had half filled the tiny closet she sat down again, her hands folded in her lap.

The house was very still. Now and then the weary tones of a woman's voice filtered through the open window in a Latin jargon quite beyond Caroline's high-school attainment. Occasionally younger voices chimed in with questions; eager young voices, alert with interest. Farther down the court a typewriter clicked and raced; now and



then a man's short, merry laugh came ringing across, the odor of a cigarette following.

For some time Caroline sat, her ears strained toward the court. Now and then came a girl's flute-like voice raised in question. The teacher explained, then dropped back to her monotonous reading.

Presently there was a quick step down the hall. A key rattled in the lock next door, a window was flung wide, a shade adjusted, and a merry whistle broke into song. Caroline caught the words. They stormed the thin partition:

So, then it's up with the Blue and Gold — down with  
the Red,

California's out for a victory . . .

Down on the Stanford Farm they'll make no sound

When our "Oski" rips through the air.

Like our friend Mr. Jonah, Stanford's team will be  
found

In the tummy of the Golden Bear.

Caroline listened to each clear note with rising interest. Her lips broke in a smile. Between the scraping of a chair, or the opening of a drawer, the words were dropped, but the tune went on in a merry whistle. The chorus came back again and again:

Like our friend Mr. Jonah, Stanford's team will be  
found

In the tummy of the Golden Bear.

The song ceased for a moment and Caroline



heard the scratching of a match and the sharpening of a pencil; then the tune went on.

The whistle began taking all sorts of liberties with the refrain; it introduced trills and variations. Sometimes it rose clear and vibrant, dwindling to a scarcely audible and breathy gasp. Again it stopped, and a disgusted "Can you beat that, now!" took its place, accompanied by the scratching of another match.

The work must have grown more interesting on the other side of the door, for after awhile the tune stopped altogether and the click of a typewriter succeeded it. Then the typewriter stopped and the door slammed. Once more the key turned in the lock.

Caroline looked at her watch. It was half-past five.

"I'll just have time for a little walk before dinner," she thought, and donned her coat and hat. In the office she paused for information.

"The campus — is it far away?" she asked the pleasant-faced woman at the desk who smiled and called her Miss Ravenel, a polite attention that warmed Caroline's lonely heart.

It was not far, in fact, less than a block away. The street was full of young people hurrying in every direction. Caroline stopped just outside the door to watch them. On they hurried, alone and in groups, merry girls with good-looking youths. Most of the women were hatless, coatless, save for brilliant sweaters or gay wool scarves, the fringed edges flying in the breeze.



Caroline started up the street feeling a little conspicuous in the tailored suit which had been cut first for Alison, and later remodeled for her. The girls she passed were in no such formal attire. Their pleated skirts, smart sweaters, or jersey jackets gave them a jaunty, care-free look.

For a moment she was tempted to turn back and array herself in a brown serge skirt and orange sweater, but on second thought she went on. The groups she passed were too intent upon greeting old acquaintances to notice her.

Without difficulty she found the wide, hospitable gate that opened to the campus. It had a friendly look and she passed its portal with a kindly stare. It was her gate now, the entrance to a new, exciting world.

The curving path to the right led to green rising ground. Caroline took the gentle slope leisurely, feasting her gaze upon the buildings, the ample grounds. As she reached the campanile, an imposing tower, a silvery shower of chimes broke above her. She stopped to listen, thinking more of the music of the bells than of the time. It was a rhythmic, yet compelling sound, breaking into the evening stillness with authority.

Two girls passed. She heard one say, "Six o'clock! Where has this day gone! Meet you at the oak in the morning. Good-by."

Reluctantly she retraced her steps, lagging a little as she sighted the hotel. She dreaded the loneliness of the shabby red room with its faded walls and worn carpet.



At the door she paused for a last lingering glance into the street. Turning suddenly, she came in violent contact with a young man evidently bound in her own direction. She stepped back in embarrassment.

"I beg your pardon. Stupid of me! I was watching some friends up the street."

"So was I," Caroline answered, giving him smile for smile. "Not friends exactly—I was interested in the people."

"Yes; they're flocking in now; the old town's full!"

He put his gray tweed cap under his arm and opened the door for her.

In the glare of the office lights she gave him a sidelong glance. Her mental comment was, "My, but he's good-looking!" His, though Caroline would scarcely have understood: "Some little knockout!"

The elevator left them at the same floor. With a slight acknowledgment of their chance meeting, he hurried on. Halfway down the hall he stopped and fitted his key in a lock, but before it turned, he burst into an energetic whistle.

Caroline waited until he had closed his door, then smilingly opened the one beyond.

"So!" she commented below her breath, "that's Mr. Jonah!"

Just what Mr. Jonah's whistle had to do with a rather hurried search through the ark (it was always called that in the family) for an organdy frock, was not quite clear, even to Caroline herself,



but something had proved an inspiration. The tailored suit was relegated to the closet.

“One feels so much less lonely if one dresses for dinner,” she declared to her pricking conscience, as she emerged from a refreshing shower in the dreary scrap of a bath and attacked a shining mass of wavy hair; “not that anyone will in the least care how I look,—unless perhaps it might be one of those dear old ladies in the lobby.”

The hair was neat at last, each defiant hook on the lacy ruffled blouse coaxed into place. The exertion of hastening her toilet had brought a ruddy glow to her cheeks, a sparkle to the topaz eyes. She gave a saucy, backward glance toward the mirror.

“I reckon, as Maumy says, I’ll get past a crowd and escape the ragpickers,” she laughed, and quietly locking her door, rang for the elevator.

It was not until the colored waiter had drawn out her chair and seated her comfortably at a single table at the very end of the long dining room that she had the courage to look about. The sight that met her eyes was not exciting. The room was filled largely with elderly men and snowy-haired women. Now and then an occasional girl lifted her eyes from consommé or chicken, and directed her remarks to a goggled youth, or a solemn-eyed professor slipped into a near-by seat and buried his nose in a musty looking volume.

Caroline gave her attention to the menu. It was a new and rather interesting experience to order.



It took some minutes to decide between lamb and beef, cocoanut pie and ice cream. She had daintily dipped her fingers in the glass bowl that the waiter put before her and signed a card according to his instructions when she took another look over the room. The aspect had not changed materially. The group of elderly women was augmented by several girls who had filled vacant places.

She went straight to her room. As she stepped from the elevator she heard a commotion in the hall near her own door. A porter was moving a trunk and Mr. Jonah's musical voice called, "Send her over to the Fraternity house, George; you know the number. We got a cook to-day and I'm leaving your joint. Catch!"

A coin spun through the air, lodging in George's cupped hands. Mr. Jonah dodged back into his room and Caroline entered hers.

The next hour was not pleasant to contemplate, even in retrospect. The house had settled to its nightly quiet. Across the court a wheezy voice recited a tale of cold and rheumatism; downstairs a piano sounded, faint and mournful; Caroline recognized Muriel Roach's masterpiece: "The Last Hope."

Homesickness, so long repressed, welled in her heart. She went over to the bed and selecting one of the snowy pillows buried her face in it.

"If I'm going to have a downpour, I might as well make myself comfortable," she thought with characteristic humor.

And then the storm broke!



## CHAPTER VI

### THE CAMPUS

THERE was still a pink flush about the hazel eyes the next morning, but a dash of cold water and a bit of talcum powder covered the tell-tale marks of the night's surrender to homesickness.

"I am glad I took that walk last evening for I know exactly what to wear," Caroline thought, as she dressed in the pleated skirt and soft old gold sweater.

It must have been extraordinarily becoming, for many heads turned to watch the alert, slender figure as it passed. Following the common rule she wore no hat, and the thick Kirtley hair, dressed with extra care, showed to unusual advantage.

Remembering her father's injunction, "straight to the dean of women," she turned her footsteps in her direction. The room was crowded. She took her place in line and waited patiently while the dean, with remarkable expedition, answered the questions of the horde before her.

"A list of boarding places, please," Caroline said, when she at last stood before the desk.





Many heads turned to watch the alert, slender figure  
as it passed. *Page 46.*







The low, well modulated voice attracted instant attention.

“A Freshman, Miss —”

“Ravenel — Caroline Ravenel.”

“You are just entering?”

The conversation was mere routine. Caroline asked as few questions as possible, and went out with the list tucked carefully away in the depths of her sweater pocket.

It was hours before she thought of it again. She was standing on the steps of a beautiful white building, her brows drawn together in a puzzled frown. In her hand she held the list of addresses, each just so much Greek to her alien eyes.

“How on earth am I going to find these streets,” she thought, and at the same moment almost lost her equilibrium through a violent push from somewhere behind her. She reached for a couple of books that she had acquired in the day’s travels and turned slowly.

“Oh, I do beg your pardon,” a clear voice was saying apologetically, “I was so stupid. Let me help with those books. You see, I had just turned to run after my history prof, and I didn’t see you.”

“You are quite excusable, I am sure. I wasn’t looking either, so I am equally at fault. Please don’t mind. There isn’t a particle of harm done.”

For a moment they stood looking into each other’s eyes, both laughing. The stranger put out her hand. Caroline took it, snuggling into its warm grasp.



“Freshman, I fancy?”

“Yes, how did you know?”

“We all have that bewildered, don’t-care-if-I-live-or-die look at first. I have many times thought it’s just the way angels must appear in heaven.”

Again they laughed.

“Could I help you in any way?”

“You could tell me how to find these boarding places. I haven’t the slightest idea where to go, or what car to take.”

“You poor infant!” The word came with such motherly kindness that Caroline choked back tears. “Let me see — Haste Street — you go out this gate and follow your nose straight ahead for three blocks, then turn to your left and go three more. Nice location, Haste, lots of Sorority houses over there — Wait a minute! Is it a room you are looking for?”

“Yes — room and board.”

The girl gave Caroline an appraising glance before she spoke.

“I happen to know of a rather nice place — in quite the other direction — neighborhood not so smart, perhaps, but good. It’s where I live. There was a room this morning. Chances are it’s gone now. Everything is full up. I’m afraid you are going to have a bad time.”

Caroline’s eyes had not been idle. She had taken in the clear-cut features of the tall, attractive girl before her, instantly deciding that she liked her.



"May I ask your name?" she ventured. "Mine is Caroline Ravenel."

"I'm Margaret Mackintosh."

"It sounds protecting — Mackintosh," Caroline stammered, her bubbling laugh mingling with the deeper tones of the older girl's.

"It's Scotch."

"I'm from the South — or my people were — Virginia."

"Yes, I know."

"How?"

"By your vowels. Nobody in the West caresses them."

"Do I?"

"Do you — you emboss them; wrap them in velvet."

"Thank you. I suppose you mean that for a compliment."

"Would you care to see the room?"

"May I?"

"I'm going there now. Come along."

It was not far, a matter of four or five blocks. "Just a good walk," Margaret declared. "You are always ready for lunch after climbing the hill. But perhaps you don't like hills."

"I adore them. I wish you could see ours at home. In Colorado. We live there now. We moved on account of my father's health."

"I see. It must be wonderful. You have snow, don't you?"

"Snow! Oh, yes."

"I've never seen snow," Margaret admitted.



“You’ve never seen snow!” Caroline’s eyes opened in surprise.

“Never. I have always wondered what it felt like coming down on you. Does it strike hard, make you dodge or anything?”

Again Caroline’s laugh bubbled.

“Mercy, no! It comes in little flakes, soft fluttery flakes that sting your cheeks, and stick on to your eyelashes, and frolic down your coat collar.”

Margaret’s gray-green eyes were pools of light.

“I should love it,” she said. “Here we are. The white house with the hydrangeas, ‘Sign of the Tubs’ the girls call it.”

To Caroline’s great disappointment, the room was gone. Taken but an hour before.

Margaret too seemed disappointed. For a moment she was lost in thought. “I’ll tell you,” she said, and stopped.

“Tell me what?”

“I was just thinking. Come upstairs a minute.”

At the end of the hall she threw open a door and raised a window blind.

“Look here first,” she said, waving toward the window. “We don’t have snow in California, but we have — that!”

For a moment Caroline stood speechless. It was her first glimpse of the sea.

“And now if you are through feasting — it is a feast, isn’t it, that water — you may look at the room. It just happens that my roommate was



called home this morning — a sudden death — poor Jean. Perhaps it's rather ridiculous on such very short acquaintance, please feel quite frank about refusing, but if you like —"

Caroline glanced at the square, hospitable room and gave a little cry of joy.

"You mean that you would have me — take me in?"

"Yes, I think so. The Scotch in me says 'be a little careful.' You must be careful, too. You don't know what you are getting into. We'll leave it this way: see the dean about it and I will, too; she doesn't make many mistakes."

"When could I see her?"

"Not before morning, I fancy. Unless — it is just possible you might catch her if you hurry."

"And if she says 'yes' —?"

"Move right in. I must have somebody. I prefer to choose — rather than be chosen."

The dean's remarks were straight and to the point. "Margaret Mackintosh? I congratulate you, Miss Ravenel. There are few girls on the campus so worth while."

The next few days were so busy that there was little time to get acquainted. In fact, Caroline and Margaret were scarcely ever in the room at the same time, except, perhaps, a half-hour before dinner. In the evening they started off to the library together, where they sat quietly in their places at one of the long tables, oblivious to surroundings.

The room, from the first, delighted Caroline.



It was large and airy, with two wide windows to the west. The twin beds had been separated, one removed to the extreme left of the room, the other to the right. At the side of each stood a small table with a reading lamp upon it, and at the foot a neatly covered box, suitable for shirt waists and linen. There were also two small dressing tables painted white, with cretonne scarfs that matched the box coverings. There were two comfortable rocking chairs, and two straight smaller ones; a writing desk painted white, old and a little wobbly, and a large closet plentifully supplied with hooks and hangers.

Caroline's first glance into the closet gave her something of a shock. Margaret's wardrobe occupied the smallest possible space. In fact it consisted of a suit, a raincoat, an afternoon gown of a dark, nondescript color, two blouses and a winter hat.

"Please don't give me all the closet," she said to her roommate, thinking the space had been cleared for her.

"I haven't," Margaret answered. "I have all the room I need. My gowns are my least consideration. One can't bother much with a wardrobe when one's a senior. Who'd do the mending and the fussing and the brushing?"

"I am afraid you will think I am terribly frivolous when I unpack the ark," Caroline answered. "But my sisters arranged my clothes. They selected what they thought I should have."

She was rather glad to shove the blame of too



much "fixing" upon Leigh and Mayre. Margaret's simple austerity seemed to demand excuses.

On Saturday, Caroline disgorged the ark. Margaret came home to find the room a cross between a bazaar and a bargain counter.

"I am not going to put all these things out," Caroline explained apologetically, "my sister put in a surprise box —"

"How lovely!"

"I suppose she thought we'd like afternoon tea occasionally, and fudge and things."

"We would."

"And these photographs. This is the Major. Don't you want to look at him?"

Margaret took the framed photograph in her hands and stood for a moment lost in thought.

"What a remarkably fine face," she said after awhile. Caroline turned quickly.

"Oh, thank you for saying that! I think he's splendid. So do most people. A little stern maybe — in the picture — but when you know him that melts — except when we disobey. Major never has to speak but once."

"I can fancy that."

"This is Mother — and the girls." She took out the other photographs. Leigh's wistful face brought a quick, "Oh, how sweet!" from Margaret, and Mayre's artistic profile, "What an adorable girl!" "And your Mother, how placid she seems, really tranquil. Who is this elegant person?"

Caroline turned again.



“My married sister — Alison.”

“She’s very stunning.”

“Yes.”

“And who in the world is this?”

“That — oh, that’s my old darkey mammy ‘what brung me up — often!’ Maumy’s something like the little girl with the curl; when she’s nice, she’s awful, awful nice. Are you going to mind if I hang these pictures up — on my own side, of course. I’d sort of like to have them around — the Major, anyway.”

“Of course you must hang them. I’ll help you. But I won’t promise to dust for you. Where will you have Mammy?”

“We call her Maumy — I don’t just know why. Over here for the present, on my dresser. I am so accustomed to her eagle eye that I think I’d best have her round to keep me straight.”

It took some time to hang the frocks. Margaret was so interested. Each must be inspected and admired. It was when she said, “You must have very indulgent parents to equip you so beautifully,” that Caroline’s native honesty came to surface.

“I’ll tell you a secret,” she said. “My married sister is quite — well — comfortably off — and she gives me a great many things. Leigh is very clever about making them over. She always helps the seamstress and Mayre designs everything.”

“My dear, you needn’t explain all this.” Margaret’s Scotch reticence floated surfaceward.



“But I want you to know. You’ll think it funny after awhile, when you see how I have to save and economize.”

“I shall understand.”

The words, given in an abrupt, off-hand way, spoke volumes. It was as if Margaret had said, “My means are very limited. I have almost nothing to spend.”

The room began to clear. The frocks were put away, the pictures hung, the round center table placed before one of the windows and equipped with an electric chafing dish and several dainty cups and saucers. The spotless white cover gave it an appetizing appearance, Margaret said. She could scarcely wait to make tea.

“Let’s do it now, then,” Caroline insisted, diving into the surprise box.

Mayre had provided a delectable array: Chinese tea, such as Leigh loved to use on company days; dozens of Maumy’s ginger cookies; even jam carefully wrapped and packed.

The party proved a bond. There is something about the breaking of bread together that promotes friendship. Margaret, sitting cross-legged on the floor, supped her tea leisurely.

Caroline watched her as she rose and put her cup on the table. For all her clothes were plain, she wore them with an air. There was a savor of aristocracy about her, as if the spirit of numberless Scots, purposeful and true, dwelt within her.

There was a half-hour’s chat as they washed the cups and put away the cookies and jam. A



corner of the wide closet made an excellent larder.

Later that same evening Caroline's second social experience came. She had taken her accustomed place in the library, her books open before her. Reaching up to adjust the small table light, she found it was not in working order. With an impatient, "Oh, bother!" she tried again. She was about to move her seat when a voice at her elbow inquired, "May I be of service? These lights seem to have ideas of their own about illumination."

Caroline lifted her eyes — and looked straight into those of Mr. Jonah.

He answered her smile with one quite as friendly.

"Think we've met before," he ventured.

"Yes — sort of a — forced acquaintance."

"I hope the blow wasn't that bad."

"I didn't mind. The next morning I met my roommate in the same way. It seems to be the proper mode here."

Mr. Jonah took the bulb from his own light and inserted it in the one just above Caroline's head. It also refused to burn. A laugh went around the table. Caroline's cheeks flamed. He crossed the room, coming back with a new bulb.

Toward the end of the hour Margaret whispered, "I am going to leave you now. I have an errand before I go home. Think you can manage to find your way alone? A lot go that way."

"Oh, yes; don't mind about me."



Perhaps Mr. Jonah heard. At any rate, as they left the library, he walked beside her. Out in the starlight he took her books. "May I stroll along with you?" he asked.

Caroline couldn't be rude. "If you go my way," she answered.

Mr. Jonah did not commit himself.

Out in the road the conversation developed naturally. When they reached the white house with its tubs of hydrangeas, Caroline felt that she had known the tall, kindly youth beside her for a long time. He was extremely likable. Pausing at the foot of the veranda steps, she looked up into his brown eyes mischievously.

"Goodnight, Mr. Jonah," she said.

"Why Mr. Jonah?"

"That's what I heard you singing in the room next to me the night I arrived. I shall always think of you as that."

"But I have a name — an honest-to-goodness one."

"Don't tell me."

"All right. If I must be a Jonah."

A laugh stopped the sentence. He turned away, and then came back.

"Perhaps I am a little presumptuous — I hope you won't think so, but — I wonder if I could get a date. I'd like to come over and bring Emma."

Caroline seemed puzzled.

"I would like to meet her, but — don't you think we should first be introduced?"

Mr. Jonah scratched his handsome, near-kinky



head. "Maybe we had. I'll try and arrange that to-morrow," he said.

It was late that night, after Margaret had turned out the lights, that Caroline ventured a question.

"Do you know that nice young man that fixed my light in the library?"

"Yes, slightly."

"Is he nice?"

"He's what the girls call a 'knockout.' "

"What's that?"

"Very attractive. One of the big guns on the campus. Football captain."

"But is he all right — a gentleman?"

"He goes with the nicest girls," came the answer followed by a yawn. "Yes, I admire Bidell Webster immensely. His father's money hasn't made a fool of him. That's more than you can say for a lot of the fellows here. Think I'll say good night. I have an eight o'clock, in the morning."

For a long time after Margaret's steady breathing indicated sleep, Caroline lay thinking.

And at home, at the foot of the old Peak, Caroline's family lived and breathed and waited for her letters. They came frequently, colored with the old sparkle, alive with gossip and adventures. Sometimes the Major took the dinner hour to read them at the table, so that all might enjoy them together. Maumy often lingered in the background, her ears strained, her eyes bulging with surprise or indignation. Occasionally, excitement betrayed eavesdropping.



“Caroline writes that she has her course quite straight now and is hard at work,” the Major interpolated one evening, before reading farther. “I must confess that I can’t quite see the need of taking up Anthropology —”

“What is that?” Mayre interrupted. Mayre was not a student.

“The science of man, my dear child,” the Major answered. “Nor any special benefit in Entomology —”

“What on earth is Entomology?” Leigh questioned.

“The department of zoölogy that treats of bugs and insects.”

“*Bugs!*” The word came like the crack of a whip. “Bugs, Marse Major; For the love o’Gord, ain’t Miss Car’line got ’nuff to do out yander ’thout pickin’ on bugs — *and insecs!*”

The scorn in Maumy’s tones sent the family into peals of laughter.

“Seem lak sceerce as money am now-days people done gone crazy payin’ out to learn ’bout bugs. Bugs ’nuff here in this Gord-forsaken country!”

“And she thinks she will take up orchard spraying,” the Major went on, a twinkle in his eyes. “Perhaps she can revive your old peach tree in the spring, Mayre, with her acquired knowledge. She also refers to a course called Oriental — something Japanese, I take it.”

Mrs. Ravenel dismissed Maumy, before remarking:

“It looks as if Caroline had lost her head, Doc-



tor. I am quite distressed. When I was a girl, we studied literature and deportment, followed by domestic science."

The Major's eyes danced with mirth.

"Your daughter is feasting at present," he comforted. "She has been led to a banquet, and her selection is a little rich. The only danger is scholastic indigestion. Wait until the cramps of examination attack her. Give her time."

"I do hope she won't over-do." Leigh seemed troubled.

"One would scarcely infer that to be the case from this," the Major went on:

"Life at college is wonderful and exciting. Margaret and I are quite settled in our room and get on very well together, though we really see but little of each other. She is a fine, high-minded type of girl, one Mother would altogether approve of, for she has a Scotch reticence that is quite Kirtley in its oblivion — that is, she drops a curtain between her affairs and the world, and keeps it down most of the time. Occasionally one gets a peek. I did manage to find out (without seeming or feeling curious) that her mother is a widow and they have a little cottage they call a "lodge" down by the sea — forty miles away — and that it isn't just the easiest thing in the world for her to remain here. At present she has a scholarship (six hundred dollars a year) which helps a very great deal. She graduates this year and then, if possible, wants to go on with a law course, but that is indefinite. She may have to teach for



a few years and earn the money. Oh, dear, Major, why is it that people like the Briggs have so much money they don't know what to do with it, and poor Margaret—but I mustn't stop to moralize, for I have a theme paper to hand in at eight o'clock in the morning and it's eleven p.m. this minute. In my next letter I will tell you about the girls in the house, and also of a nice young man with splendid looking shoulders and a natural marcel that he tries (unsuccessfully) to defeat with water and hard brushing. He walked home from the Libe the other night (see the list of college slang I have appended—one just has to fall in line and use it here or be a prig) and took me for a drive with a dashing young thing called Emma—more of her later. Also, more of my instructors at another time. Oh, yes, I almost forgot to tell you: you may think the orchard spraying and bug study a little queer, but it is rather your own fault, Major, for being a Ravenel. Occasionally a course goes alphabetically; if a class fills up on A. B. C's the R's get Hobson's choice. See? I should have preferred more English, but couldn't make it this semester. The other subjects I chose."

The Major folded the letter and returned it to his coat pocket.

"Will you convey Caroline's apologies to Maumy, Leigh, and explain about the bugs," he asked, the twinkle deepening in his eyes. "She will rest better to-night if she knows. She's inclined to think Caroline's 'debil' is rampant."



“And may I inquire what the child means by walking home from the Libe?” Mrs. Ravenel asked plaintively.

The Major got out the letter and ran his eye over the appended slang.

“Libe,” he read, his finger following the long list of words. “Libe: the Library where we go to study.”

“Thank you, Doctor.”

“Would you care to hear the whole list? It is rather interesting and constructive.”

“I think not. I am content to remain a purist, despite the present urge of education.”

“We shall have to remember that Caroline is trying to fit in with her own generation—” the Major remarked softly, “and grant her the privilege.”

“But there are bounds, Doctor.”

“She will not exceed them.”



## CHAPTER VII

### BIDDY AND EMMA

IT was several days after the event in the library that Caroline again met Biddy Webster. He was crossing from one building to another, but he stopped to acknowledge Margaret's bow and Caroline's hesitating smile.

"You know Mr. Webster, don't you, Caroline?" Margaret said, making the introduction easily. "If you don't, you should."

Biddy's hand went out graciously.

"Delighted, Miss Ravenel," he said, his eyes reflecting the smile that appeared in Caroline's.

"We — we sort of know each other," he remarked pleasantly; "not a real bona fide acquaintance; just passing, one might say."

Margaret hurried on. Biddy, despite his evident hurry, lingered for a moment.

"Going to be busy after three o'clock?" he asked.

"No — not particularly."

"Could I meet you down at the gate? I'll have Emma."

It was "Emma" that won the privilege. Caroline was a little curious.



She found him at three, waiting for her, his expectant eyes turned in her direction.

"Emma's down the road. They won't let her come on the campus," he remarked, as he took her books and swung into step beside her.

"Won't let her?"

"No — she's been expelled."

"Expelled!" Caroline's steps halted.

"But she's a dandy old girl, for all that. Don't form your opinion until you see her. Emma always pleases."

A little way from the gate he stopped beside a flaming red car. "Allow me," he said, gravely, "Emma, old dear, meet Miss Ravenel. She's just a little afraid you are not a proper chaperone, but I've vouched for you. Speak up pleasantly, please."

He tooted the saucy horn and held the front door wide.

"Surely you are going with us," he said, as she hesitated. "Emma will be awfully sore if you don't. She's devilish sensitive."

Perhaps it was his bantering smile, or the candid look in his honest eyes — or the fact that Margaret had vouched for him that settled the matter. At any rate, Caroline stepped into the car, sinking down in the luxurious seat beside Emma's owner.

Emma puffed and sputtered, then, as they swung out into a cleared space, purred like a friendly kitten.

"How do you like her?" Biddy asked, when



they had reached the open road and turned toward the hills.

“She’s splendid!”

“Hear that, lady? Miss Ravenel likes you. Now show her your best steps.”

“Oh, please, not quite so fast.”

“The road is clear.”

“But there are so many turns.”

“Emma knows them like a book. She’s an educated lady — if she can’t make the campus. You see she’s had an extension course, special work.”

His conversation ran on entertainingly. They were in a part of the country new to Caroline now, a timbered, hilly district, with amazing views and cozy, sheltered nooks. Below the winding road the campus lay cupped and calm.

“Oh, please, not quite so fast! Let me look. How beautiful it is — the hills, the woods — and yes — there it is — the bay!”

Biddy stopped the car.

“It is beautiful,” he said, seriously. “I love it myself.” For a moment the brown eyes intent on the view were wholly tender. “You see, I’ve never known anything else much — of course we’ve traveled, the governor, Mater and I, but we always come back. When we get over the border” (he pointed jerkily to the east) “and I get a whiff of old California air, it goes to my head like wine. I want to get out and yell or beat somebody up or —”

“I know,” Caroline admitted generously. “It’s



like my mountains. The whole Rocky Range belongs to me. We understand each other."

"Great stuff, but —"

"But what?"

"California's different, you know —"

"No more wonderful."

Her laugh was lost in Biddy's heartier chuckle.

When they had reached the highest pinnacle, he pointed off down the valley.

"That's where I live when I'm at home," he said, "about forty miles from here. Like to drive you down some day. Show you the vineyards. I have two sisters, married. One has a ranch close to the old place."

"Why, you must live somewhere near Margaret Mackintosh; she's off in that direction."

"Not far. Forty miles on a California road is a mere step. I'll drive you and Margaret down for a week-end. You can stay a night with her and then come on over to our place. Mother often chaperones a crowd. Last year we had our 'Formal' down there — fraternity dance, you know."

They were getting on rapidly for so short an acquaintance. The Kirtley blood, which always rose to occasion, put on the brakes.

"You are very kind," Caroline answered politely, but she made no promises.

It was quite five o'clock when Emma stopped before the boarding house, with its stately hydrangeas. The time had gone like magic. Caroline glanced at her little silver wrist watch, (part-



ing gift from the Major) and drew a breath of surprise.

“Why we have driven for over an hour,” she said; “I’ve had a wonderful time.”

“Emma thanks you.”

“I thank Emma.”

The whistle gave a responsive toot. They both laughed,—the free laugh of youth and good spirits.

“Suppose you are going to the Libe to-night?”

“It looks as if I would have to go early and stay late—now. I had intended to put in two good hours on my English this afternoon.”

“See you later, then.”

“Probably.”

“If you are very late I should be glad to bring you home.”

“Thank you.”

“Is it—agreeable? Emma will be dozing down by the gate.”

“I prefer to walk.”

“So do I. Don’t imagine I ride all the time. I have to keep pretty fit for the team, you know.”

“Yes, Margaret told me. Good night. Thanks, so much.”

“The pleasure was mine.”

“Not all—it was splendid to see the country like that.”

“The country, yes—”

“And get acquainted.”

His winsome smile repaid her for the compliment.



She turned when she reached the top step of the veranda, to watch the handsome car glide away down the street. A moment later, when Margaret opened the bedroom door, she commented on the rosy flush that had dawned in Caroline's cheeks.

"Was it the fresh air, or Biddy's entertaining conversation?" she asked saucily. "I saw you heading for the hills."

"I reckon it's a little of both," Caroline answered, the color deepening.

"The Sign of the Tubs" was not a particularly congenial place, outside of a few convivial souls. Margaret saw very little of the boarders, except at meal time, and then only for a brief twenty minutes while the plain, but thoroughly wholesome menu was being served by a Chinese boy in spotless coat and trousers. Mrs. Blackstone, the proprietress, insisted upon cleanliness.

Margaret had no time for the girls; she was always pleasant when she ran upon them in the halls, or at table, and her friendly smile put her beyond the pale of a snob, but Caroline sometimes halted in the big living room and talked shop (shop meaning lessons) before the crackling fire that lent warmth and cheer. Sometimes too, on Friday nights, lured by the phonograph, she took a whirl around the halls and library which had been cleared for dancing. Before she had been in the house a month she knew each girl by name, where she came from, and, in some unaccountable



way, her general aim. She admired Constance Moore, the studious sophomore across the hall; she liked Margery Macon, the pretty little butterfly who hovered over the campus like a hummingbird, feeding on festivities and shirking responsibilities. "She really isn't half so no-account as she appears," she defended when the other girls criticized.

And the girls liked Caroline. Those childhood days spent in the Virginia foothills, or in the long triangular Kirtley yard, had a distinct place in the formation of her character; they had molded her, made her adaptable, given her an air of comradeship.

"The girls are having a feast to-night in Claire Colburn's room," or, "Mary Fellows is cutting her birthday cake, and we are invited," she would say to Margaret, who invariably replied, "Trot along, my dear, if you want to — I can't — not with the stack of work ahead of me to-night."

So Caroline would steal across the hall, or up on the next floor, to be circled by half a dozen pairs of arms and given the comfortable seat next to the smoky register that did its best to send up a remnant of heat.

Margaret, aristocrat to her finger tips, would have felt ill at ease among girls who differed so in types and standards. Not so Caroline. She might never have chosen Margery Macon for a friend, or found comfort in Constance Moore or plain, stupid little Fanny Garth — but they interested her; her gregarious nature responded to



their solicitations as naturally as a flower turns to the sun.

As the days grew into weeks, life took on new interest and color. It was so wonderful, so fresh and altogether different; something within her went out to meet it, thrilling at its joys.

Every phase of college life interested her. She loved its traditions, its lure, its opportunities. Above all she loved being a part of it, a unit in the great structure.

One day, in passing, a Senior thrust a little book into her hand. She opened it with interest. The first thing that caught her eye was the college president's message to Freshmen. Its democracy struck at the roots of her being. "Seek the company of the clean," he said, "those whose hands are clean though they are calloused, whose clothes are clean though they are worn, whose words are clean though they are simple, whose thoughts are clean though they are plain. These different forms of cleanliness go together, and react upon each other."

And she was acquiring knowledge. She had learned to drop her eyes in maiden modesty when she passed the Senior Bench that stood in front of the "Co-op", a campus rendezvous; that men gathered on the west side of the stairs in a certain building, while the girls took the east; that only Freshmen hauled wood for rallies; that upper classmen wore cords on their hats while the "Fresh" sported a baby bonnet; that "All Hail", the university hymn, was sung at the



close of all affairs, from sorority teas to the Big Game; that everybody uncovered and stood while it was sung. She sometimes wondered if everybody thrilled to its call as she did.

As to other learning — her studies — well, one did the best one could with them and trusted to luck and strong coffee to weather examinations. Her notebooks were filling up, and anyway the Major, wise man, had said that education was seventy-five per cent experience. He had cautioned her about working for grades. Understanding was the first consideration, and he had reminded her that life's best races had not been won by the swift.

California delighted her. The soft air, almost a caress, sometimes cool and misty, sometimes fresh and invigorating, rested her when she was tired, encouraged her when she was low. There were days when the world seemed so beautiful that she stopped on the campus and thirstily drank in the view, and then, remembering how Mayre would love it, dropped down in the Glade beside a tinkling brook and scribbled a disjointed letter on a leaf from her notebook. Sometimes it read:

“If you were only here this morning, darling, to see the bay sparkling in the sunshine.” Or “How green and lovely the grass is, how wonderful the flowers. On my way to the campus I took a short cut through a glorified alley where geraniums, saucy, flaming, scarlet things, were racing each other up an old barn door. Fancy, in an



alley! and you watch yours for each tiny blossom. And heliotrope! It always makes me think of Mother. Can you picture heliotrope bold enough to climb to second story windows to see what's going on inside? Well, it does here. Violets sprawl everywhere, and nasturtiums play hopscotch on everybody's lawns. You would go wild with joy over them."

Or, "Biddy Webster and I walked up on the hill to the 'C' last night and watched the sun take its nightly dip into the sea."

Or, "I wish you might have awakened with me this morning and viewed the sunrise. Margaret and I have been sleeping on the tiny porch that opens off the hall—just room for two cots. Yesterday I was so blue—everything went wrong, but to-day—well, to-day it is joy to live!"

And again, "It seems cruel, dearest, that you can't have what I'm getting out here—sunshine and flowers and birds—they are so much more a part of you." "This afternoon I had a half-hour to spare so I went up in the Campanile—the great tower that rises hundreds of feet above the campus. There's something about going up there that lifts one spiritually, as well as bodily. You have one grand sweep of country; hills, sea, forest and city. Tevis needn't talk to me about going East to finish my education. This is my 'Promised Land.'"

Her letters to the Major took on a more serious note. Chronicles of everyday happenings; ideas



upon colleges in general; accounts of her work with side lights on teachers; interesting, soul-revealing letters that the Major read with a smile, sometimes with a wistful sigh, often mistily.

Sometimes her fresh enthusiasm swept him back to his own college days, — as when she wrote of the rallies:

“Now, toward the middle of September, the very air seems charged with football. One hears little else. On Thanksgiving we play Stanford, and of course California will win. Perhaps I hear a little more about the game than some because of Biddy Webster, the Varsity Captain. He has been very nice to me and is a great favorite on the campus. Very unspoiled, too, considering the homage paid him. The air fairly pulsates when he shows up. And at practice, such yelling: ‘What’s the matter with Webster! He’s all right!’ And then thousands of voices mingling:

‘Here’s to you, friend Webster!

Here’s to you, our jovial friend!’

“But I got my first real thrill the other night at the Greek, an enormous amphitheater where the big rallies are held. How I wish you might have been there, Major! All day long the Freshmen hauled wood through the streets for the bonfires; wagons, buggies, motors and trucks were brought into use, and the town ran riot with college yells and songs. By seven everybody in Berkeley was hurrying toward the campus, laughing, singing,



jostling, elbowing, squeezing. I shall have to wait until I see you to give you details; word pictures (on paper) would never do the scene justice. But perhaps you can imagine ten thousand student voices raised in college songs, directed by a yell master that inspired the men almost to frenzy; the great leaping, roaring, mounting fire that threw its lurid gleams higher and higher — out over the tree tops and on, up to the very stars; that swaying, waving, smiling mass of humanity within the sacred old stone walls — sometimes screaming, sometimes chanting, sometimes humming — each with a newspaper before his face to hold back the scorching flames (newspapers with holes cut in for eyes to peer through), and the sophomores yelling at the top of their lusty lungs, ‘MORE WOOD! MORE WOOD!! MORE WOOD!!!,’ freshies scrambling to comply, throwing on boxes, tree roots, shingles, logs, always taking care to pile it on the sophomore side, so that the flames almost scorched the greedy rooters.

“And then, dear Major, can you see the throng rising, hear those thousands of voices ringing, floating out over the city in one grand, ‘All Hail’?”

“All hail, Blue and Gold, thy colors unfold,  
O’er loyal Californians, whose hearts are strong and bold.  
All hail, Blue and Gold, to thee we cling,  
O’er golden fields of poppies, thy praises we will sing.  
All hail, Blue and Gold, on breezes ye sail,  
Thy sight we love, all hail, all hail.”



## CHAPTER VIII

### OLD FRIENDS

**I**T was one day late in September that Caroline, hurrying across the campus, was stopped by a young man who held out his hand and smiled agreeably.

“I can’t be mistaken; this is Miss Ravenel, isn’t it?”

Caroline avoided the hand until she had taken a look in the smiling blue eyes above her. The tall, attractive youth seemed very sure of himself.

“You have the advantage of me,” she began.

“You don’t remember me? I’ll give you three guesses — as you used to give me when we were ten and twelve respectively — in Warrensburg, on your father’s woodpile —”

“Willy Boland!” she exclaimed, taking the hand and shaking it warmly. “Where on earth, as Maumy would say, did y’all hail from?”

“Maumy still living?”

“Living! I should say she is. I had a letter from her this morning, via Leigh, of course. But tell me what you are doing here?”

“Studying.”



“You mean that you have entered California?”

“I have.”

“But — how come?” she laughed, falling again into darkey vernacular.

“The folks moved here about a month ago; mother hasn’t been well for some time. She clings to me — girls all married, you know — ”

“How perfectly splendid — not about your mother — I’m terribly sorry — but your being here — ”

“Rather like it, myself.”

“Junior, I suppose.”

“Yes; had two years East — Dartmouth.”

“And you like the West?”

“Now that I have found you.”

Caroline’s quick, responsive laugh floated on the breeze.

“Do you know — I’ve often thought about it — that I’d tell you if I ever saw you again — I was frightened to death once for fear I would have to marry you, and take care of you — that time — on the woodpile when my devil broke loose — ”

“I’m not sure but I may hold you to it yet — ”

“Willy!”

“Billy, please. Willy was shed with knee trousers.”

They walked on, talking and laughing. When they parted, they had planned to meet later in the day.

“I will call for you at half-past five,” he said as he turned. “We dine at seven. Mother will be so anxious to visit for an hour.”



Something made her turn to look at him. Did she imagine it, or was there an almost imperceptible limp in his gait? The suggestion tormented her all morning.

It was delightful to see Mrs. Boland again, although in her childhood Caroline had rather disliked the frail, anæmic looking woman, invariably swathed in shawls. She found her still frail, but her face lighted with pleasure at the sight of Caroline.

“Dear child, it is a real joy to have you with us,” she said in her sweet, slow drawl. “Billy has been telling me that you were at the University, but that he could not locate you —”

“Scarcely, among thousands.”

Caroline watched him as he rose to wrap the soft wool shawl about his mother’s shoulders; his devotion was quite beautiful, she thought. Yes — surely — he did limp — ever so little.

For a moment she floundered in the conversation. Then with Caroline directness, she blurted forth:

“Billy, did that fall I gave you, ever — ever have any bad results? It is still on my conscience, always will be.”

Billy’s smile was reassuring.

“Oh, sometimes in damp weather, when rheumatism is in the air — to-day with this fog, for instance. Rheumatism always nags a bruise.”

“I am so sorry.”

Southern chivalry rose to the occasion.

“Forget it. It was no more your fault than



mine. I consider it a pleasant reminder of a very unusual little playwright. Doing any stunts now, by the way; seems to me somebody wrote us you were a budding authoress."

"Budding is right. My work has never bloomed."

"But you keep it up?"

"Oh, I scribble when the mood's on."

"Dramas?"

"No; yarns."

"Have you ever remodeled 'The Garden of Eden'?"

A flush mounted Caroline's cheeks and edged into her hair.

"That was a crackerjack! You remember you offered me the lead, but I declined."

They all laughed. "Tell me about the McFees," Caroline begged, and the hour was spent in home gossip.

It was so delightful to dine at a home board with candles softly aglow, with a soft-footed, soft-spoken negro woman passing Virginia ham and beaten biscuits, that Caroline lingered, despite the lessons awaiting her attention at the Libe.

When she finally said good night, it was with the promise of an early visit.

"I'll be in early, dear," Billy said, stooping to kiss his mother's wasted cheek, and the colored maid took the invalid away in a wheel chair.

"Does your mother show improvement here?" Caroline asked kindly, as they started for the campus.



Billy shook his head and his voice was low and troubled. "No, not materially, and she misses the home folks. Come in often, Caroline, if you can. Try to dine with us every week — it would be a blessing to both of us."

"I'm pretty busy — but I'll try."

"Sally Colfax runs in frequently. I suppose you have seen her."

"You don't mean to say Sally Colfax is here."

"Surely. Lives here. Don't you know that Berkeley is a Mecca? Sally's a very popular young woman on the campus. Made an honor society last year, and one of the best sororities."

"How interesting."

"She will be no end glad to see you. The Colfaxes always swore by your father."

"Everybody adores the Major." The remark was not without pride.

And so it chanced, the next day being Saturday, that a very smart runabout stopped before "The Tubs" and an attractive looking young woman with a voice of silvery sweetness made inquiry for Miss Ravenel.

There was a pleasant reunion in the big square bedroom and a cup of tea to cement old friendship, in which Margaret joined.

"What a funny little old world this is," Caroline remarked tritely, as Sally made her departure, "and how we all seem to be bound together. Here is Margaret, a member of your honor society and here am I — the friend of you both — and so proud to be."



"I'm mighty glad to have found you again," Sally whispered, as she bent to kiss Caroline's brown cheek, "though in the old days I used to be terribly afraid of you. I remember so well," she broke off and laughed, "the day Mother and Aunt Rose were having tea with your Mother — Tom and I were at dancing school —"

"I know — the day Billy Boland was hurt."

"The same; Mother came home and offered up a prayer because Tom escaped. Oh, you were a scamp! Do you know, Margaret, what the neighbors used to call Caroline? 'That awful little Ravenel girl!' She was always in mischief; no one ever knew where it would lead her. I do hope you have reformed, because it would give me a lot of pleasure to introduce a Kirtley in these parts. You know in the South —" she turned again to Margaret — "Kirtley blood is royal blue!"

"I will try not to disgrace you," Caroline promised.

"All right, I shall trust you, and to seal the bond, lunch with me at my sorority on Monday. I'll meet you at the Oak at 12:15. I'm really dying to have the girls know you, despite your reputation."

With a wave she was gone, and Caroline stood for a moment, lost in thought, as the busy little motor chugged its way into the near-by avenue.





Sometimes, over a cup of tea, Margaret and Caroline talked the matter over. *Page 81.*







## CHAPTER IX

### THE OLD CAROLINE

**I**T is rather remarkable what a little influence will do for even a very plain girl on a university campus, but to an attractive one, with breeding and charm, opportunities are unlimited.

Two weeks after Caroline lunched with Sally Colfax, she was bidden to more functions than time permitted her to accept.

Sally, with southern spirit and loyalty, had proclaimed Kirtley standards, Kirtley precedents, Kirtley inheritances to all of her acquaintances, and the seed of her enthusiasm had fallen in fallow ground. Caroline became a mild rage, where before she had walked (save for Margaret and the girls at the boarding house) independent and alone. And she was not quite sure that she liked the change. It encroached upon her time, kept her denying silly statements, brought her friends that she feared might be a hindrance, rather than a help, for, to move in a certain set — even in college — means a curtailment of personal privileges.

Sometimes, over a cup of tea and Maumy Rachel's cookies, which arrived in fresh batches



every two or three weeks, Margaret and Caroline talked the matter over.

“Of course you will be asked to join a sorority when the rushing begins again after Christmas,” Margaret said, eyeing her roommate a bit wistfully.

“Why have you never joined, Margaret?” Caroline asked.

A faint crimson wave tinged Margaret’s pale, high-bred face.

“One has to be bidden, my dear.”

“But surely you have been — so many fine things have come to you.”

“No — a scholarship girl has no place in a sorority. The expense is too great.”

There was silence for a moment.

“Would you have joined — please don’t mind my asking — if it had been possible?”

Margaret turned her tea into her saucer and inspected the grounds in her cup critically. “Look,” she said, “see what’s in my fortune: a gift, a letter and a surprise!”

Caroline seemed a little crestfallen.

“You needn’t answer my question if you’d rather not — I did not mean to be inquisitive.”

Margaret put her cup on the table.

“A sorority?” she said, looking out through the west window to the sea. “Yes, I suppose I should have joined — had I been able. There’s an advantage in being a member — prestige — opportunities for friendships.”

“If only more girls like you would join — ”



“There are heaps finer. Don’t get it into your head that sororities are made up of dregs. A good sorority often makes a woman out of a drone. In the first place she has to work. If she doesn’t, they won’t have her. If she fails, she drags the whole house down. That’s a responsibility few like to face. Take Margery Macon. A sorority would be her salvation—if she could make one. She would have to wake up. The girls would make it frightfully warm for her if she didn’t. As it is, she’s going to flunk out her first semester.”

“Oh, I hope not!”

“The die is cast. She’s too pretty to be flattered, too unstable. She needs the strong right arm of a Senior sister.”

“But they are all so — so undemocratic — don’t you think?” Caroline was still speaking of sororities.

“There’s been class distinction ever since time began. I’ll wager old Mr. Noah picked the nicest people he could find to fill the ark. As for sororities, what’s the difference between them and a boarding-house club?”

“But aren’t sororities more snobbish?”

“Oh, there are always snobs — everywhere. Social, intellectual, Christian; the Episcopalian scorns the free Methodist; the college, the finishing school; the dilettante, the student. You can’t change the universe; it isn’t worth while to try.”

Caroline felt that she had entered a maze beyond her unraveling.



"I don't wonder that you are going to be a lawyer," she said with one of her swift, characteristic smiles. "You'll be a great success. A minute ago I had very definite ideas upon this matter; I have yet, but they're muddled. I reckon I'll write to the Major." Which she did, at length.

In due time the answer came back.

"There is a good deal of sound reasoning in your roommate's arguments for a sorority," he wrote, "but I think, upon this subject, you must rely upon your own judgment and conviction. If you are asked, and care to join a sorority, I am quite willing to help you with the expenses. Fortunately, collections are picking up, and I am beginning to feel more comfortable in regard to finances. From experience I realize what a stimulus the binding together of ideals and standards can be. I regard such an affiliation as an advantage."

"Even the Major seems to side with you," Caroline said to Margaret, in discussing the matter further. "But I still insist that sororities are very undemocratic institutions. You remember how unhappy Constance felt a few weeks ago when the girls dropped her after feasting and entertaining her for a solid week?"

Margaret wheeled suddenly.

"Did it ever occur to you that there is another approach to this subject?" she asked. "Join a sorority and inject your democracy into it. You have a personality that counts. Use it."



It was an astonishing compliment from Margaret. Caroline looked at her in amazement.

"Perhaps I will not be asked," she said quietly.

"I'll chance that."

"Margaret, do you want to be rid of me? If I joined a house I would have to live there."

"I have thought of that — but I would be very selfish to stand in your way; no, I —"

She evidently thought better of what she was going to say and changed the subject with her usual abruptness.

Caroline passed the first three months at college without many twinges of homesickness. There were times when a vision of the comfortable old red house at the foot of the Peak brought a swift rush of tears, but her work was too absorbing to admit of "spells."

As the holiday season drew near there were waves of longing. Leigh wrote:

"We can't imagine Christmas this year with you and Alison both away, but we shall have to make the best of it. Maumy is just sick about it, fusses and fumes all the time. Last night she said, 'Marse Major, it's plum dre'ful to let that chile stay out thar wif strangers Chris'mus time!' And this morning, what do you suppose she did: Came in before I was up, and asked me to go to the bank and draw out her 'bury'n' money and send it to you for railroad fare. I said, 'But, Maumy, how about that sheaf of wheat you've been saving for all these years?'"

"'I done give up ever getting back to Virginny,' she reminded me, 'and if I's buried here, ain't nobody gwine



care whether I has wheat er corn huskins.' Poor old dear, she's very childish, and sometimes a great trial."

A few days later Mayre added:

"Maumy is too trying for words these days and so notional. Yesterday she made Leigh go to the bank and draw out two hundred dollars. She's so mysterious about what she is going to do with it. Keeps it rolled in an old rag stuck in her bosom during the day, and heaven only knows what she does with it at night. She's getting her clothes all fixed up. Quite fussy about them. Leigh thinks she's going back home before long.

"We are so delighted to know that you are spending Christmas with Sally. Hope that you will have a very happy day. Our box of goodies and gifts will reach you a few days before Christmas, but you mustn't open it until the twenty-fifth, will you?"

There were also letters from home: Brief snatches from Jimmy Ludlow, queer and cryptic, with little undercurrents that Caroline's liberal mind could not fathom. One day a mere paragraph elucidated:

"I am very sure that your friend, Biddy Webster, is quite the hero that you picture him. All campuses boast him. Glad to know that his hair is short, not long. The natural marcel is a thriller! I love your college spirit, Caroline, but I must remind you that I am four years out from the sea of my college experiences and can't quite match your pep. Couldn't you make your letters a little — well, general, perhaps — more items of common interest?"



In the next mail this went back:

JIMMY DEAR:

“What a horrid bore I must have been. Please do forgive me. Have been reading such an interesting book on Australia. Did you know that out there they have recently discovered a potato with a purple jacket and blue eyes? Should think they would be much more aesthetic and tempting than the grubby home variety. I had never given much thought before to potatoes — that is to their artistic value — but now I can see how fascinating they might be in this color-producing soil. I have been wondering if carrots might not, under like conditions, deepen in tone to — say, a rich, gorgeous, American beauty shade, ribbed with national colors, or perhaps a rainbow effect. And turnips! What possibilities with their dainty, cream and blue shadings. Can you fancy anything more exquisite than a turquoise turnip?

“And onions! I have also been thinking about them. In fact, your letter inspired me to a bit of free verse:

“As ever, with all good wishes,

“CAROLINE.”

Attached to the letter was this:

TO AN ONION

Beautiful, lustrous, golden-brown creature!  
With my cruel knife I tear  
From off thy tender body  
Its silken sheath.  
Why these tears?  
It is because I foresee thy doom,  
Boiled in a kettle of salted water,  
Salt as my tears — salt as my tears?



As Christmas week came on, California belied her reputation for sunshine and fair weather, ushering in a period of wind and rain that added to the general gloom. Caroline was not, as a rule, mercurial in disposition, but wet, disagreeable weather had the effect of dampening her enthusiasm.

"Your beautiful climate is acting abominably," she said to Biddy Webster one afternoon, sharing his umbrella on the way home from the campus. "I can't say I like this horrid little drizzle that comes down like a summer shower and turns you into an icicle! At home, when it rains, it rains. You know it is raining and prepare for it."

As she spoke, a gust of wind took Biddy's umbrella and turned it inside out. The soft, insistent rain became a deluge.

A few days before Christmas the experience was repeated and Caroline, a bit homesick, was again disagreeable.

"These make-believe storms," she began —

"'Make-believe!' You condemned them as being 'frights' the other day," Biddy bristled.

"Oh, you people out here don't know what a real storm is! You should see one gather over Pike's Peak. It's the most glorious Fourth of July celebration you ever witnessed. The lightning shoots across the sky leaving a sizzle a mile long, and the wind — you think wind bad here — I wish you could feel Colorado wind. It lifts you off your feet and carries you along like a kitten."



Biddy stopped in the road and looked into Caroline's teasing countenance.

"Do you want to see an honest-to-goodness storm?" he asked.

"Where?"

"Out on the bay. We can ride over to the city and back."

The old Caroline, dormant but alive, rose like a ghost from dead ashes. Her eyes were two golden flames.

"I should perfectly adore it!"

Two minutes later Emma's nose pointed toward the ferry. With each bound of her flying feet, the storm rose. The wind shrieked and raced, and although it was but five o'clock in the afternoon, the day was dark and threatening.

"Sure you're not afraid?" Biddy asked, piloting her up the gangway.

Caroline was too busy catching her breath and holding her hat to reply, but she turned a smiling face as they ran for the upper deck.

It was great sport at first. Nobody seemed alarmed, though the sea rose high. When the boat rolled, men, women and children took hands and ran with the lurching deck to safety on the other side. Now and then an angry wave washed the railing, leaving a muddy rivulet on the floor.

Suddenly the boat dipped, swung to the left, then turned completely so that her bow headed in the direction from which she had sailed. A seaman called, "Everybody inside!" and cleared the deck.



Caroline seemed bewildered for a moment; she felt dizzy. Biddy's protecting hand on her arm reassured her.

"We'll go into the ship café," he said. "This choppy sea may make you ill. We'll have some coffee."

Many were of the same mind. The long tables, polished and bare of cloth, were filling up; waiters in white coats, smiling at the storm, hurried to and fro, spilling, splashing, skidding across the floor with orders, yet withal good-natured.

Caroline's coffee had barely been placed before her when the ship lunged, sending the cup sliding across the board, where it fell in the lap of a portly woman who railed at the waiter's stupidity and sent glowering looks in Biddy's direction.

Caroline liked Biddy's attitude. He was kind, rather than annoyed. He assisted the waiter in sopping up the stained garment, hoped that it was not quite ruined, and smiled so delightfully that the woman saw the humor of the situation and laughed with him. Biddy had the happy faculty of making friends.

They were over an hour in crossing. Sometimes the ship battled with the wind. Sometimes it almost seemed as if she played with it, turning and careening, buffeting the lunging waves, parleying with them, then steadying in her course, worn with the frolic.

Once or twice Caroline's face blanched, but still she laughed. It was only when they landed and



found that no boats would be sent back until the storm subsided, that she became alarmed.

In the ferry building people paced back and forth restlessly. Tired business men, weary mothers with children clinging to hands and skirts; anxious girls. Old settlers talked of the storm.

"Worst in twenty years," Caroline heard a grizzled patriarch say as they passed him. "I hear that one of the boats struck the Island."

Caroline shivered and a cold chill ran down her spine. How had she dared take such a chance? Suppose she had been in an accident. She had left no word as to her whereabouts.

The situation alarmed her as the storm had failed to do.

"I must get word to Margaret immediately," she said to Biddy. "No one knows where I am."

Biddy came back from the telephone booth with a face a little anxious.

"The lines are down," he said.

"But we can wire —"

"Telegraph lines are down, too."

"What shall we do?"

"Stay here, I fancy, until we can turn back — or, we might get up town to a movie."

Caroline chose the waiting room.

As the hands on the clock crept to seven, then half-past, then eight, her restlessness became apparent.

Biddy was contrite.

"I got you into this," he said; "I'm sorry, but



you were so sure Colorado — Say,” he broke off, “can the wind blow in California?”

“It can.”

“As stiff —”

“Stiffer.”

“But you said —”

“That was this afternoon, Biddy; I’ve changed my mind.”

It is strange how well acquainted people can become in a few hours. At nine, when the gates opened and people streamed through to the belated boat, Biddy knew the Major, Leigh, Mayre — even Mrs. Ravenel and Alison — quite intimately, and in turn, Caroline had made the acquaintance of “the governor”, “Mater”, and “the girls.” Aside from the fact that she had been a little indiscreet and thoughtless, no harm was done, — unless Margaret had raised an alarm; but Margaret was not given to that sort of thing.

The wind was dying down on the other side of the bay. Biddy rather insisted upon a taxi to save time in getting to the house, but Caroline, her frolic over, was inclined to be ceremonial. “The street car is all right,” she insisted.

As they neared “The Tubs” her heart fluttered anxiously; suppose they had sent out messengers for her. She remembered a far distant day when the town crier had been hurried into service in her behalf. How often she had heard her mother tell the story. His call, “Child lost! Child lost!” had never ceased to thrill.

The house was in sight; dark as a tomb, save



for a glimmer in the living room. She wondered about that. Mrs. Blackstone was very particular about lights. They were always turned off downstairs promptly at ten, except for a dim, half-toned bulb encased in a red shade that adorned the lower hall.

Biddy made his adieus quickly.

Caroline fitted her latchkey into the lock quietly. The house was deathly still, save for a steady resounding snore that escaped the confines of a bedroom and traveled its weary length down the long flights of stairs.

Caroline paused to listen. Never, during her four months' residence in the house, had she heard such a sound, and she and Margaret had come in late on several occasions.

She stopped in the hall, puzzled. "It isn't coming from upstairs at all," she thought. "It's from the living room. Some one has fallen asleep there; that's why the light's on."

She crossed the hall and looked in. She could not see well at first but gradually the room cleared. It took but a moment to find the truant.

Caroline's eyes were a study as they rested upon her. They flashed with astonishment — with humor; they clouded with bewilderment; but gradually a tender light dawned in them: a light that shone with affection.

On one of the least comfortable chairs, her body relaxed in sleep, reclined a portly old woman. Her black bonnet with its bold purple pansies had slipped from her head (the ties had been loosened



for comfort) showing a row of kinky gray pig-tails. Her arms hung limp and heavy. A shabby black handbag had escaped a hand that hovered near it, and a yellow and red bandana handkerchief stuffed with oranges, apples and cookies kept it company. At her feet stood a wicker suit case, new and bulging.

It was Maumy Rachel.



## CHAPTER X

### CHRISTMAS

FOR a moment Caroline stood looking at the pathetic figure, so weary and worn with the long journey. A sob choked her. She dropped down on her knees and gently shook one of the heavy arms.

“Maumy dear, wake up,” she whispered. “See, it’s I, Caroline!”

There was a trembling of the heavy shoulders, a surprised gasp and Maumy straightened. Her eyes strained until the yellow whites were uppermost. Then the old arms opened, and Caroline flung herself into them. Maumy drew her down on her lap.

“Thar, thar now, lambie, don’t cry. This ain’t no way to greet me when I done come so far to see you. Thar, thar now, don’t, honey, don’t! Youse gwine be sick if you carry on this-a-way. Maumy cain’t bare to hear you sob.”

The strain of the past few hours, the sight of the beloved old face linked indissolubly with her childhood, loosened the torrent of homesickness that had, unconsciously, been welling for weeks in Caroline’s heart.

“How are they all?” she managed to ask after



a moment. "The Major, Mother, and the girls?"

"Jes fine, honey, jes fine!"

Maumy fumbled in her handbag and brought forth a spotless handkerchief.

"Wipe yer eyes, Missy, and don't cry no more. Maumy's gwine spen' Christmas wif y'all. She ain't gwine let you stay way off here by y'self."

If she calculated that her remarks would brace Caroline, she was mistaken. The torrent broke again.

Maumy settled back, comforting the heaving shoulders with gentle pats.

"I reckon youse jes got to have yo' cry out," she said, with a trembling sigh. "Go long, and when you gets through, tell Maumy what y'all been up to to-night. Some'fin, I knows."

It was not long before she had the whole story. But she did not scold. Something in Caroline's face checked admonition. It had grown older. There was a look of the Major's in the clear, honest eyes. A look that Maumy recognized and respected.

"I reckon if y'all's old 'nough to come way long off here to school, y'all's old 'nough to tend to yer own affairs, Missy, but that war a turrible risky thing to do. Turrible risky! I'se s'prised at you, well as I know you."

It was some time after Caroline had freed her conscience and drawn a hassock up beside her old nurse, that she said:

"Now, Maumy, tell me just why you came? Surely not just to see me?"



“You and Charity Harrison, honey.”

A light dawned in Caroline's eyes. Charity was Mrs. Colfax's cook. She had come with the family from Virginia. Caroline remembered Sally's having told her that Charity had set up an establishment of her own somewhere in “cullud town”, coming in by the day.

“You are going to visit Charity?”

“Yes'm.”

“How nice. But I must find a place for you to-night. Wait a minute until I speak with my roommate.”

“I kin set here, Missy; I'se kinda tired out now. Them chair cars ain't so restful as they make out.”

“Maumy! you didn't sit up all the way from home?”

“No'm, no'm; I recline consid'able.”

“I should think you would be dead!”

The light was out in the west chamber, but Margaret called, “That you, Caroline?” She touched the electric switch and winked up at her.

“Blow in with the storm?” she asked sleepily.

“Were you worried about me?”

“No; I supposed that you were with Sally until your old Maumy arrived soon after dinner; then I telephoned. Sally thought you were at the Boulds. But I couldn't locate you there.”

“Then what did you do?”

“Went to bed, after trying to make the poor old woman comfortable. She insisted that she'd just ‘set awhile’ until you came.”



“The storm has blown over now, so that we can go out on the porch. Would you mind if Maumy slept in here — just for the night. I could put her up on the couch. She’s colored, I know, but she’s as clean as —”

“Why, of course. I thought of that, but she wouldn’t come upstairs.”

A few minutes later, Caroline was again at Maumy’s feet, listening to the home news with avid interest.

“But how on earth did the Major happen to let you come?” she asked.

“Bress yer heart, he didn’t know nofin’ ’bout hit.” Maumy chuckled cunningly. “Brother Brown, the Bap’tis’ minister, fix it up. I give him a right smart contribution fer his church. I told Miss Leigh I war goin’ to a festible and stay all night with a friend —”

“Maumy! that wasn’t like you.”

“You ain’t never run away, has you, Missy — ’thout letting the home folks know? Seem lak I reccommember one time —”

“Leigh must have been wild when you didn’t come back.”

“I fix all that. I got a young cullud pusson to take a note up next mornin’, saying where I’s gone, and to stay till I gets my visit out. I’s always wanted to see Californy and seem lak I jes couldn’t face Christmas without you, Missy. Is you got my Christmas gif?”

“I sent it to you at home.”

Maumy’s face fell.



“Well, I reckon they’ll keep it fer me.”

“But, Maumy, you must have spent a great deal of money, coming here.”

“I done had it to spend.”

“But you wanted it for your funeral.”

“Yes’m, that’s so, but I had some more.”

“More?”

“When Madame went back home to England she done give me some — fer old time’s sake.”

Caroline’s eyes widened with surprise.

“Madame Wakefield.”

“Um-hungh.”

“For old times’ sake?”

Maumy caught her breath and frowned.

“All them times I made tea fer her, an’ corn bread an’ cookies. Once in a while I done took her a batch when you-all didn’t know; after we done got acquainted. Seem lak she relish my cookin’. They ain’t no white gal kin make beaten biscuits.”

Caroline seemed puzzled.

“I hope she didn’t think we were sending them,” she mused.

“Oh, no’m, she understan’. When she guv me the money she say fer me to take a trip some day. She say it war restful and educatin’. Yes’m.”

“Why, it must have been quite a sum.”

“It war right smart.”

Good taste (even with old Maumy) forbade going further, but Caroline pondered over the gift for many days.

Of course there was news of the Major. He



was looking well, though sometimes very tired. Leigh was gaining all the time; as "purty as a flower" so Maumy said, and Mayre a great comfort to her mother.

"Seem lak they done pair ·off since yo' went away, Missy, yer Maw and Miss Mayre, an' the Major an' Miss Leigh. Miss Leigh, she stay in the office most of the time, and Miss Mayre, when she ain't helping with the housework, is up in the 'settin' room' whippin' lace with her Maw. I'se terrible 'fred some times," Maumy's voice dropped to a whisper, "thet she's gwine be an old maid. Don't no young men come round. Nobody but Mr. Blair."

"How is Mr. Blair?"

"Fine, fine, honey. Some day he gwine run way with Miss Leigh; you listen to what old Maumy's sayin'. Yes'm, he gwine pick her up and carry her off right 'fore Major's eyes."

"I hope so, Maumy."

"So does I. Miss Leigh was made fer a home and a fambly. Look how she brung you all up."

They were almost ready to say good night when Caroline asked:

"How did you ever find your way up from the depot, Maumy?"

"A cullud genel'man brung me. He was comin' long with some trunks and things, and I splained how I was a stranger in these parts and would he give me a lift."

Caroline turned her face to smile. It was just



as well Maumy had arrived after dark. It was not difficult to picture the excitement among the girls, had she driven up on the express wagon, the bold purple pansies in her bonnet threatened by the wind, her startled eyes straining for "The Sign of the Tubs." Caroline could see her climbing down, nodding and smiling her thanks, gathering her precious belongings about her.

Christmas was not the ordeal Caroline had feared it would be. The Major's telegram in regard to Maumy's safety was the next best thing to hearing his voice. It bridged the intervening miles and brought her into closer touch with him. There were letters, several of them, and the Christmas Box.

The Christmas Box! That brought a poignant wave of homesickness. Margaret had gone to the little lodge by the sea, and Caroline was all alone when she opened it. She was almost glad, for there was no one to see the tears that spotted Leigh's dainty handwork, her mother's initialed handkerchiefs, the Major's generous check.

Her mother had sent an exquisite old locket on a slender gold chain. Mayre had made an excellent water-color of the Peak in his white hood and cape. There was also a sketch of Madame Wakefield's house, showing the gardens, asleep under snowy blankets, acceptable additions to the room, for they were both charmingly framed.

There was a remembrance for Margaret also. Leigh had embroidered, for her, a dainty handkerchief case. Caroline wondered how Leigh



managed to do so much, and always with such a joyous heart.

And there was still another box.

Jimmy and Mrs. Ludlow had not forgotten her. She plunged into the contents with amazement. There was candy; late fiction; some of Mrs. Ludlow's famous date fingers,—a rough cake cut in strips that Caroline had always doted on. And later in the day a great box of roses, with Jimmy's card and best wishes.

There were other things that brought sudden tears. Little packages from the girls in the house. Simple gifts, outweighed in value by love and kindness.

And Maumy's presence helped. She was comfortably installed at Charity Harrison's, but she spent most of her time at Mrs. Colfax's assisting with the cooking, helping with the housework, or puttering about the garden, wondering at flowers that dared show their heads above ground in December. A phenomenon past her understanding.

California delighted her. It was warm and sunny again. Rheumatism gradually left her aching joints and her eyes brightened.

"Ef I jes had my fambly out here," she said often to Caroline, "I'd stay the rest of my days, but I reckon Miss Leigh's need'n' me right smart, and the Major's missin' his mawnin' bacon; ain't nobody but me crispen' it 'nough to suit him."

Which was very near the truth.



Mrs. Colfax's southern cooked dinner brought old memories. It was a feast such as Caroline had not seen since she left Virginia; the round mahogany board groaned with the weight of Charity's "Christmas fixin's."

After dinner, in the early twilight, the rooms were cleared for dancing. The Bolands had come over, Billy wheeling his mother across a green common, and the young people in the neighborhood gathered to share a tree that towered to the top of the drawing-room ceiling.

Before the dancing began, Caroline went over to where Mrs. Colfax was visiting with Mrs. Boland. A merry fire danced on the hearth, even though the sun had shone at summer heat all day. California had redeemed her reputation for a bright Christmas.

"I wonder if I might speak with Maumy for a minute," she asked, "I am afraid perhaps she may be a little lonesome to-day — without Leigh and Mayre. It is her first Christmas away from them."

"Of course, dear," Mrs. Colfax answered. "You'll find her up in the nursery. She asked especially to tend the children this evening. You know where it is — third floor, to your right."

Mrs. Colfax's daughter, Mrs. Barker, and her children lived in the house.

Caroline heard Maumy's wavering voice crooning a familiar song before she reached the door. She stopped to listen, then peeked in. A golden, curly head reposed on Maumy's ample bosom, and



at her feet a little lad played with his Christmas toys.

Caroline entered softly. Maumy raised a warning finger. The lad looked up with an expectant smile. Caroline dropped down on the floor beside him.

For a long time she sat there, looking out into the sweetly scented dusk, her arms circling her knees, her chin resting on them.

Maumy went on with her lullaby. Outside birds chirped sleepily. Children's voices came softly up the street. Occasionally there was a joyous shout, followed by a peal of silvery laughter.

The shadows thickened. The lad picked up his toys and went away to bed. Maumy still crooned, half under her breath. Now and then Caroline glanced up into the tender old eyes above her, filled with dusky shadows. She knew that Maumy was far away, back in the old Kirtley nursery, singing to her own "chillun."

She shook off her dreams presently and got up. Maumy lifted the sleeping child, put her in a small white bed, and drew the blankets tenderly. Caroline's eyes were full of tears.

"Does it make you think of little Hope, Maumy?" she asked.

Maumy's hand covered her eyes. A tear trickled beneath her old knuckles.

"Yes, honey," she said, when she could speak. "Miss Hope, she allers beg fer that song."

"I remember. Oh, Maumy, you've been so



good to us all! We love you so. I just ran up here to tell you —”

She threw herself on the breast that had comforted her childish troubles and hid her face for a moment.

“And to think of your coming way out here to see me, Maumy.”

Maumy loosened the arms that had gone round her neck.

“I ain’t come to see you,” she said, fearing another torrent. “I come to see Charity. Ain’t we raised together, till she done went to the Harrisons? Ain’t w’all first cousins?”

Caroline pushed Maumy under the nursery light and looked at her with teasing eyes.

“Look at me,” she commanded. “Did you come to see me — or Charity?”

The thick lips, with their withered yellow lining, opened in a smile.

“Well, I reckon if youse boun’ to pin me down — it were both —”

“Maumy!”

Maumy reached up and patted the slender young shoulders that towered a little above her.

“Well, I specs, honey, I could ‘a’ lived ‘thout Charity, somehow, but you —”

An exclamation in the doorway stopped the sentence. Billy Boland stepped into the room.

“For the love of Mike,” he began, but Maumy’s threatening finger cut the sentence.

“Don’t you wake my baby,” she scolded. “Don’t you dare, Marse Willy.”



Out in the hall his laugh broke bounds.

“What on earth are you hiding up here for, Caroline? We’re having a Virginia reel downstairs, and I want you to dance with me. Uncle Bildad’s come over with his fiddle (Uncle Bildad was Charity’s husband), and we’re going to have a ‘Down South’ celebration. Some party, I’ll say.”

Caroline hesitated.

“I really ought to stay with Maumy a little while,” she protested. “She came all the way out here to spend Christmas with me —”

Maumy stepped into the hall.

“You go long with Marse Willy,” she insisted, “I ain’t got no time to be bothered now. I’s got to dry Charity’s dishes and eat my dinner.”

With her usual gesture she shooed the young people down the stairs, tiptoed back to see if their laughter had awakened her baby, turned out the light and went down the back stairs to join her own people.



## CHAPTER XI

### NEW FRIENDS

**M**AUMY left for home early in January, laden with bundles, baskets and flowers. Her happy face was quite obscured by an armful of wild huckleberry branches she was carrying to Miss Mayre, and flowers peeped from many parcels.

“You will have to pay extra for all that thar trash,” Uncle Bildad said as he helped her on the train, and Caroline echoed his sentiments.

“You really are going to take up an awful lot of room, Maumy,” she said. “It doesn’t seem quite fair.”

“Never mine, honey, never mine. If the conductor gets pertenacious, I’ll divide with him,” she laughed, as if the gifts of nature were as dear to all humanity as to herself.

By the second week in January the campus had taken on new life. Wanderers returned, refreshed by the annual vacation, ready for the tasks that lay before them.

Caroline loved that awakening; the activity; the colors flashing in the sunshine; the pleasant nods as she passed to and fro from work; the chats under the oaks and along the murmuring creek in



the Glade. She loved the great lecture rooms, filled to the doors with attentive, interested students.

She wrote the Major:

“The thing that I love best about this wonderful place is its impersonality. There is no favoritism, no ‘pull’, no partiality. Each student stands upon his own feet, sinks or swims by his own effort. No one cares a fig whether one reaches one’s goal or not — except one’s self. If one fails, one fails, and slips quietly away. If one succeeds, there is no blare of trumpets, only a glad feeling that warms the cockles of one’s own heart.

“People are wont to say that in a smaller institution students get in closer touch with teachers, receive more personal attention. Perhaps! But I choose the bigger place with its bigger outlook; its bigger men, its limitless ideals.

“I am doing very well with my English, though my instructor is right fussy. The other day I got angry and didn’t plan out my theme as usual but wrote it right off, going over it only for spelling and punctuation. I got an A. Hereafter, I shall write them all right off. Awfully worried about my history. History is a thing you either know — or you don’t. No chance to exercise gray matter and be original. Naturally, I love English best. Oh, the joy of being given a theme you like and told to swing to!”

At the beginning of the winter semester Caroline found herself interested in the matter of Sororities, despite her intended indifference. She was deluged with invitations to teas, to luncheons, picnics in the hills, formal dances.



Sometimes she came back to Margaret worn out with festivities.

"I'm dead tired of being on parade," she said. "I suppose I have been discussed from the way I lace my boots to my great-grandfather's reputation for honesty. I hope the girls don't find out that I once had a great-uncle who ran away from his regiment in the Civil War, and hid in a cave. The family got him back in time to save his skin, but that little detail might be omitted in rushing. There's scarcely time for facts."

Margaret laughed. "It is rather strenuous," she remarked. "Going to join Sally's sorority?"

"I don't know. Perhaps if I am asked. The bids are out to-morrow. I'm going to wrestle with the problem to-night."

The morrow brought the bid as Margaret had prophesied, and for a while the boarding house was in a flutter of excitement.

"You lucky girl! How wonderful! Such a marvelous house!" So the comments ran.

It was after Margaret had closed the door upon the last excited guest that she turned to Caroline.

"I offer you my sincerest congratulations," she said happily. "I hope that you will accept this invitation. It will mean so much to you, not only during your college days, but in the years to come."

The words were warmly given, with such a glad light in the fine face. Margaret was rejoicing for her in a privilege that she herself could never enjoy. The rare unselfishness and



lack of envy revealed a nature genuinely fine.

There had never been the least show of affection between the girls, but Caroline, touched by Margaret's delight and interest, put her arms around her neck and kissed her.

"Some day," she whispered, "I am going to do something for you. Something to make you happy and glad — as you have made me."

"I have done so little, Caroline."

"I was a stranger and you took me in —"

"And I was thirsty and you gave me tea —"

"So I did. And Maumy's cookies."

Caroline did weigh the matter of sororities that night, seriously and conscientiously. She read a recent letter of the Major's many times.

"I do not like to advise you in this matter," he said, "for I am too far away from your activities to understand and evaluate them. But I make this suggestion: join your sorority for the worth of the girls, not for the national standing. Your four years' association with these young women will mean much more to you than a casual fraternal friendship later. If you are fortunate enough to be chosen by an organization that has standing, together with purposeful, interesting women, you will find an ideal combination, and one which would no doubt add materially to your happiness in and out of college. On the other hand, college does not necessarily mean fraternities; the words, as some are inclined to think, are not synonymous."

As usual he had left her free to choose, relying upon her training and discrimination. That was



so like the Major. He had never coerced, never dictated. He had simply and tactfully held up standards and ideals and let her choose.

There had been more than one important decision in her young life. She remembered one in particular. Mrs. Ravenel, being a devout Episcopalian by belief and inheritance, was insistent upon her daughters joining the church at an early age. Caroline, more or less opinionated and unruly in her early teens, rebelled at what she considered an infringement upon her personal rights.

The Major changed her viewpoint by a mere suggestion.

“Would you,” he asked one night, as they visited by the open fire in the office, “care to live in a community where there were no churches?”

Caroline thought for a moment.

“No — I don’t know that I should,” she admitted.

“Would you like to think that all over this broad land there was no such thing as a house of worship?”

“Certainly not, Major.”

“But you are willing to let others provide them — carry on the work?”

“I had never thought of it in that way — I thought one had to get religion —”

“What is religion, Caroline? Is it anything more than service?”

That was all. The subject was not referred to again, but in the spring Caroline was confirmed.

Late in the afternoon of the day on which the



bids for sororities were in, Caroline sent a short note to her father.

"I have been asked to join the sorority I should choose of all others, both for its splendid girls, and for its standing here and elsewhere. I think I am going to accept. I have thought about it long and prayerfully, and if I do join, it will be with an idea of helpfulness and obligation — not for what I can get out of it socially. The girls are of a high type; my only fear is as to my ability to measure up to them."

In her letter to Leigh a few days later, she explained her real feelings about being a "pledge."

"Well, it's over at last. The rushing. I'm a wreck. I haven't the least idea whether I have written you lately or not. Time has meant only a series of swiftly moving events all jumbled together. Do you remember that old kaleidoscope Alison and I used to quarrel over in the nursery back home — in Virginia? It's been like that: color and movement and shifting scenes that you took a bird's-eye view of, and scrambled on to something else. So wearing. I'm thankful it's over and I'm really pledged.

"The bids came out Monday morning in the form of an immediate delivery letter. Such a time! The girls were waiting in our room, so sweet and interested, and quite overwhelmed me with congratulations.

"The letter invited me, in case I accepted the bid, to breakfast at the sorority house on Wednesday morning. That's a formality that starts off the guns, so to speak, and welcomes the pledge to the inner circle.

"The house is situated on the opposite side of the cam-



pus from us, in a nest of fraternity and sorority residences. A very imposing place with wide galleries upstairs and down, and a sweeping lawn that runs away from the house in terraces. Really very elegant.

“Perhaps you can picture the excitement that morning. The neighborhood reminded me of nothing so much as the old ant heap in the back yard at home, the day Major decided the swarm must find new quarters. Remember how they ran and scattered, this way and that and the other? So did the girls here. Only they were frantic with joy; laughing, joking, hugging each other, complimenting, singing. Mayre would have loved them in their bright sweaters and best morning frocks. I wish I had words to describe the scene to you. It was so thrilling! I shall never forget it — never!

“And not only the girls. The men were equally silly; dancing on the sidewalks, marshalling round their pledges, proud as peacocks; giving college yells.

“And inside our house! See how naturally I say *our*? Such kissing and squeezing and saying of nice things! You never saw anything like it — not even Down South at one of Maumy’s camp meetings. I didn’t feel at all strange, for Sally mothered me all during rushing, telling me what not to do; it’s a terrible time, you know, sometimes you aren’t bidden for some silly *faux pas*. But I was telling you about our reception.

“When we entered the dining room the girls rose and sang to us. Then there was more kissing and squeezing and our pledge pins were put on us. We celebrated all day and at night had a slumber party. Beds were made up on the third floor in a finished attic that runs the full length of the house — really an entertainment room. All the girls came and there were more songs and ‘eats’ and college tales, until the day broke rosy and splendid in the



east. I don't remember ever having seen such a sunrise — but once: the time I ran away, years ago.

“The excitement is all over now, praise be, for I've had to dig no end to catch up on my work — to say nothing of sleep.

“Next week I move. It is going to be hard to leave Margaret, but I shall see her very often. I rather think she hates losing me, but her Scotch traditions or inheritance or fear of being thought ‘softie’ keeps her from saying much. She often acts as if she wished she could say things as easily as I do, and mean them. I really must stop now. My very best to Blair and everybody, and oceans of love to your darling self.

“P. S. Did Maumy arrive with all her plunder? She made me think of those itinerant peddlers that used to go through Virginia in the springtime with their wares tied on them. Weren't the huckleberry branches lovely? I adore those glossy leaves. We have them in the house most of the time. Fancy, in winter!”



## CHAPTER XII

### NEW EXPERIENCES

CAROLINE arrived at the sorority house late one Saturday afternoon. There was a scurry inside the hall as she entered, girls darting upstairs and through the halls, some with suit cases in their hands, some deep in armchairs, others in books.

In the drawing-room a piano gave forth a merry tinkle and a slender, dark girl danced gracefully to its rhythmic notes.

There was a rush toward Caroline. Numerous arms were flung about her; numerous voices cried, "So you're here, old dear. Welcome home."

A tall, fair girl dressed in a traveling suit came running down the stairs. She took Caroline's hand and shook it warmly. It was Hannah Rosser, the house president.

"So you have come, Caroline," she said cordially. "I am just leaving for the week-end at home — across the bay. So sorry to leave you on your first night, but the girls will look after you. Who will show Caroline to her room and find her place at dinner?" she asked, turning toward the drawing-room.



The girl who was dancing came forward, her hand extended.

"May I?" she said. "Where do her things go, Hannah? Have you decided upon her room?"

"Yes, for the time I shall have to put her with Susan Stirling. Third floor, second door to your right."

Caroline fancied that she caught the ghost of a smile flickering between Evelyn Thomas and the girl who had been playing the piano.

"Susan? Oh, yes, of course." It was still Tommy who spoke.

"Freshmen always room with Juniors, Caroline," Hannah explained, picking up her satchel and glancing at her wrist watch. "My goodness, I have just three minutes to catch my car. Bye, everybody! Don't let Caroline get homesick. See you all Monday."

With a nod and a wave she was gone and the front door banged after her.

"Better prepare Caroline before you open Susan's door, Tommy," one of the girls called, and Tommy, laughing, picked up the bags Caroline had dropped.

"Let me do that," Caroline said.

A twinkle appeared in Tommy's blue-black eyes.

"Where are all the Freshies this afternoon?" she asked, then spying one, crooked her finger mischievously.

"Ellen, help here," she called.

An attractive young girl with a homesick air came forward meekly.



"Oh, please don't ask her to carry them. I will, myself," Caroline interposed, and picking up the bags, made a dash for the stairway.

She was quite breathless when she reached the top. Tommy took the steps more leisurely.

A rap at the second door to the right failed of response. Tommy opened the door and, stepping back, waved Caroline forward.

With the first glance, Caroline's heart dropped to her toes. Two windows to the north had been left wide, and the soiled, half-frayed window blinds slapped the casement noisily. Tommy lowered the windows with a bang.

"Heavens, but Susan is careless!" she scolded. "Hannah has told her about those blinds flapping that way a dozen times!"

The room gave evidence of more carelessness. There were two beds; mere cots. One stood white and neat against the south wall. It was the only neat thing in sight. The other was crowded with coats, sweaters, tennis rackets and balls, school books and a half-empty box of candy. Every chair was draped; a raincoat adorned one, a bathrobe another; the third held a bottle of shoe polish, a nail buffer and a fur choker.

"Guess Susan must be off on one of her bug hunts," Tommy said, sweeping a chair of its burdens and sitting down comfortably.

"A bug hunt?"

Tommy pointed to the window sill. It was lined with fruit jars of various sizes. Caroline stepped closer. Squirming, wriggling beetles crawled up



the side of one; bees in another. A third encased blue flies, buzzing angrily.

"Goodness! Does she sleep with those things in here?" Caroline asked, her face in a frown.

"Oh, yes; Susan is bug crazy. Her father's the great naturalist — Stirling of —" She mentioned one of the largest Eastern colleges. "You must have heard of him."

"What's she doing way out here?"

Tommy shrugged. "Got tired of girls' colleges. They bored her. She wanted the wild and woolly West and coeducation. Awfully queer — Susan."

"I should think she must be. Go on, tell me more — the worst."

"Oh, she's a good sort. You will like her in spite of herself. She's so bright she sparkles. We're terribly proud of her with all her queer-ness."

At that moment there was a step on the stair and the door opened.

A slender boyish girl of about Caroline's own height walked in. She was dressed in mountain garb: a rather short skirt, a worn green sweater, muddy rubber boots. She wore no hat. Her head was wreathed with the greatest mass of taffy-colored hair that Caroline had ever seen. It was drawn straight back from her face and coiled in loose untidy ropes. A prominent forehead with a well-defined swell at the temples seemed to bulge away from it. Her eyes were blue and keen; her nose straight; her mouth red and attractive.

"Here's your roommate, Caroline Ravenel,"



Tommy called, making the introduction easily.

“Oh, awfully glad to see you,” Susan said, taking a long stride across the room and clasping Caroline’s hand in one hearty shake. “Excuse the looks of things, won’t you? I went off this morning before breakfast. I forgot to take my lunch along, too. Starved.”

When she smiled she showed two rows of straight even teeth that lent charm to an otherwise plain face.

“I’m afraid if you don’t get some of these things out of the way, Caroline will have to move into the closet,” Tommy remarked.

“Just a minute. Look here. I’ve got some wonderful specimens. See this beauty!” From a deep sweater pocket she brought forth a long spotted snake that opened its mouth and curled its tail lazily.

Tommy screamed. Caroline’s southern spirit rose.

“Do you mean to say that you are going to keep that thing in here?” she demanded. “If you are, I reckon I’ll go back to my boarding house.”

“Oh, do you mind?” Susan asked sweetly. “It’s really only an eel: of the Ophichthyidae family — see, it has no caudal fin. Heaven knows how it ever got so far from its own warm seas. I’m going to take it down in a minute and put it in a tub. I hope it will live until Monday. Rathbourn will be mad about it. Are you really afraid of it? Tommy, don’t be silly! Well, I’ll take it



over to the bathroom and let it swim while I dress for dinner.”

There was something fresh and invigorating about her, for all she was weary. She spoke in quick, staccato tones softened with a New England accent. She moved with a corresponding quickness, her keen eyes smiling at the girl's discomfort.

Caroline followed Tommy to the door. “If you don't mind, I think I will go downstairs with you. Perhaps I may decide to go back to my roommate. We were very congenial.”

A vision of Margaret's immaculate corner in the old room rose before her eyes and the tears came.

“Oh, don't get low, now,” Tommy advised. “You'll like us in a few days — Susan too. She isn't so bad. If you don't get on, Hannah will move you as soon as she can. She's awfully considerate.” She linked her arm in Caroline's; together they went into the hall.

“Tidy up the room, won't you, Susan,” she called over her shoulder, — Susan was busy with the snake in the bathroom.

“Sure,” came the encouraging answer. “It'll look like a million in a minute!”

The drawing-room had filled with girls. Tommy began introductions. “You remember Barbara Blue and Augusta McGruder, Virginia Dale, don't you? You met them all at rushing time and at the slumber party.”

Caroline nodded cordially.



In the corner at a grand piano a girl was playing dreamily. Tommy called to her.

“Stop the sob stuff, Shude; Caroline’s low. Give us ‘Dixie’!”

Caroline looked startled. “Please don’t,” she begged. “I really couldn’t stand that—to-night!”

The girl left the piano and came forward. A winsome smile lighted her face. Shu de Li Winston was the most popular girl in the house. And deservedly. She had an interesting history. Born in China during her father’s term at the American Embassy, she had imbibed much of the kindness, the sympathy, the tact of her adopted race. There was an indescribable charm about her. When the girls refrained from calling her Shude, which was a travesty upon her beautiful name, they construed Winston to “Winsom” and the name fitted. She was a gifted musician, though she did not know one note from the other. From childhood she had picked out chords, turning them into melodies for the pleasure of herself and friends. She was never too tired to play. “What shall it be, girls?” she invariably asked, when they led her to the piano, where her hands wandered over the keys for hours.

“Low?” she said, coming toward Caroline, her face bright with its ingratiating smile. “Not really?”

“You should have seen Susan’s room, Shude. A fright. Enough to make anybody hang the



crepe! What do you suppose she brought home to-night? A snake!"

A shout went around the room.

"Look out that she doesn't leave him or one of her precious toads in your coat pocket when she borrows it, Caroline," a girl chimed in. "The other day she helped herself to my fur coat, and when I put it on there was a mouse in the pocket. Ugh! I ran a mile before I stopped, mousie with me!"

There was another peal of laughter.

Caroline's face was a study.

"You mean to say she keeps such things in her room?" she asked.

"Oh, that's mild! Caterpillars, hoptoads, ants —"

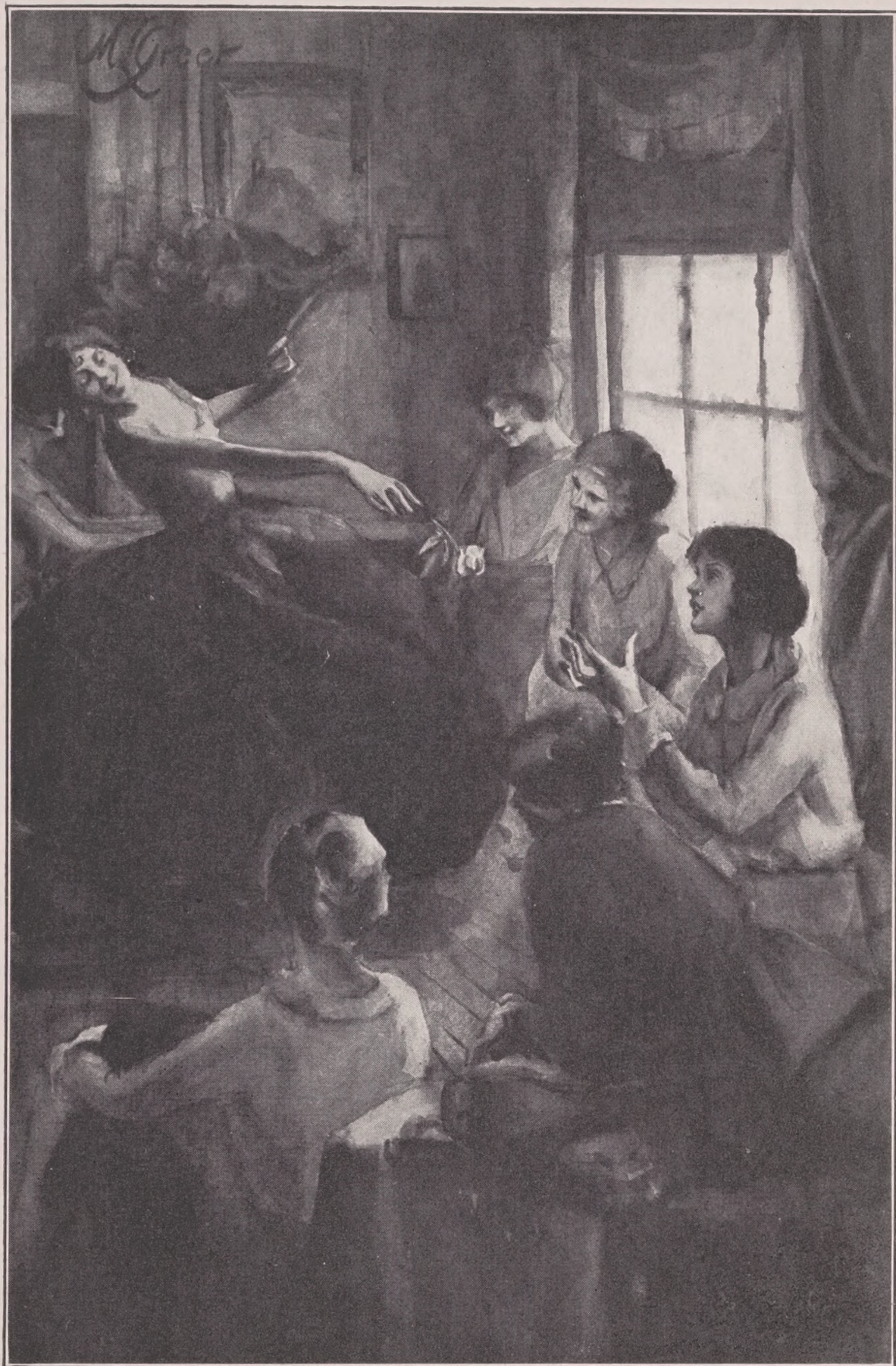
Shu de Li slipped her hand into Caroline's; together they had dropped down on a broad window seat. "It isn't half so bad as they are making out," she whispered. "We always rag the freshmen. Pretend you don't mind and they'll stop."

Some one asked Tommy to dance. "Get your costume," the girls begged; dinner still was an hour away. It took some coaxing. Tommy was tired; she had lessons; her costume was ripped apart. But in the end she consented.

"And, Tom," they called after her, as she reached the stairs, "do the orange teeth stunt for Caroline. Maybe she'll decide to stay, if you will."

Tommy shook her head.





Evelyn bowed and threw her rose into Caroline's lap.  
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“Oh, be a sport, Tom,” they chorused. “Come on; do your duty.”

Tommy was back presently, robed in a black Spanish costume that set off her dark beauty. A deep red rose nestled in the waves of her midnight hair, a plumed fan of the same hue gave a glow to the somber laces. A murmur of admiration went round the room.

“Tom’s almost a professional,” Shu de Li whispered to Caroline as she went to the piano. “Takes her exercises as regularly as night comes. Watch her when she bends.”

Tommy made her low ballroom bow and wafted a kiss toward Caroline.

Caroline had never seen more graceful dancing. The lithe young body swayed like a willow in the wind; it glided and whirled; bent backward in graceful curves that drew a riot of applause from the entranced audience; it posed and pivoted.

The music stopped in a blur of minor chords. Caroline sat up and drew a long quivering sigh.

“How marvelous!” she whispered, afraid to break the silence that had hushed the room.

The girls awakened as if from a trance.

“Encore! Encore! Encore!” they cried.

Evelyn bowed and threw her rose into Caroline’s lap.

“Encore, encore, encore! The urn dance, please, Tom; it’s so wonderful!”

“You’re honored,” Barbara Blue whispered in Caroline’s ear. “That’s the dance she gave at the Greek last week. Campus went wild.”



The air was a mad clamor when she finished. "The orange stunt," the crowd begged. "Please, Tommy dear."

"Oh, girls, I must study! I'm back in my English."

A girl thrust forth a notebook.

"Take my notes," she begged. "Please. Just the orange stunt — no more!"

Tommy retired to another room. When she emerged, she was dressed in a black skirt and a white shirt waist. Her hair had been pushed back in straight lines from her thin face. It gave her an odd, old-maidish look.

But it was her mouth that brought forth peals of laughter. Orange peel had been cut in strips to represent teeth, — long, pointed, uncanny teeth that protruded grotesquely from the parted lips.

The music changed to, "I Love You Truly." Tommy began her crude halting movements. The girls screamed and shrieked. The fun grew furious. Caroline found herself mopping tears from her eyes; gloom had turned to laughter.

Tommy had barely finished when Susan appeared in the doorway.

"My word, but you're a noisy bunch!" she cried, grinning sympathetically.

Shu de Li began to play a fox trot. Susan presented herself before Caroline. With her hand on her heart and a low bow, she said, "Will you honor me?"

Instantly Caroline felt her wholesomeness. There was a woodsy odor about her, a freshness



that came with a thorough tubbing and clean thoughts. Caroline soon learned that while Susan might be untidy in her room, her person was never neglected. Her clothes might be torn, sadly in need of mending, but they were always sweetly clean.

At dinner Caroline found herself between Tommy and Shu de Li. It compensated for having to bear with Susan's eccentricities. She was beginning to feel at home. Occasionally she raised her eyes to the head of the table where the house mother presided: an aristocratic looking woman in the early fifties. The girls adored Mrs. Rankin. Her quiet dignity was never a damper, rather a source of pride.

"She tones us up," Barbara Blue always said, and Barbara knew tone when she saw it. She was born to it.

"Who is that very somber-looking girl at the end of the table — next to Mrs. Rankin, the dark one?" Caroline whispered to Tommy, when they had come to their dessert.

"That? Oh, that's Marian Burdick. She and Babs Blue room together and hit it off about as well as if they were married."

"They are happy?"

"They rag like the dickens."

"Why do they room together?"

"Hannah thinks Marian holds Babs down. She does. Babs is very uncertain — too popular."

"She's very stunning."

"Isn't she? Never matters what she wears."



Comes back from the city with a twenty-five-cent brooch, pins it on a fluffy blouse, gives herself a pat, a whack, and a push, and presto! looks like a million. Crazy about clothes. If her mother sends her a new gown she takes it with her from the express office to the campus, puts it in her locker and changes between classes. Can't wait to see how she'll look in it. Regular vamp."

"Is she a good student?"

"She has brains — if she'd use them."

"And Marian Burdick?"

The ringing of the telephone interrupted the question.

"Will Caroline answer, please?" one of the older girls asked.

"Freshman duty," Shu de Li said as Caroline rose.

After dinner there was more dancing. Some one took Shu de Li's place at the piano and she danced with Caroline. At seven-thirty the groups began to scatter.

"Date, to-night?" one asked another.

There were nods and smiles.

Caroline found herself going up the stairs with Shu de Li's arm around her.

"Come over soon," Shu de Li said, as they parted at the third landing, "I'm right across the hall. I'm going out to-night —"

"So am I," Caroline responded. "A Deke dance."

"Biddy Webster, I suppose."

"How did you know?"



“Babs Blue. He’s one of her secret sorrows.”

Caroline smiled as she entered her room. Susan’s cleaning was something of a joke. True, the clothes had disappeared. Some of them were rolled up and laid on the closet shelf. The shoe blacking, buffer and neckpiece had been transferred from chair to table. The tennis balls adorned the bureau.

Caroline’s observation was interrupted by Susan herself. She entered the room wildly, her hand clapped to her forehead.

“Heavens! I’ve done the most awful thing,” she said, dropping into the nearest chair and gazing up at Caroline in a dazed manner. “I’ve accepted two invitations to the Psi U dance to-night. Two! Imagine! How I ever did it, goodness knows. I told Scott Hathaway ten days ago that I’d go with him, and forgot all about it. He just telephoned — so did Ned Farrar; he asked me yesterday. Well, I’ve got to get busy and find a woman.”

She jumped up and ran down the hall. Caroline heard her calling, “Shude, got a date to-night? Oh, bother! How about you, Babs? I might have known. Tom? — Of course, Warren never fails you. Good Lord, what *am* I going to do!”

She paused for half a minute and turned to Barbara’s door.

“Where’s Marian?” she asked.

“Here,” came a low answer.

She went in.

“Marian, do me a favor,” she said, flinging an



arm around her. "Don't say no. I'm in the dickens of a fix." She explained the situation. "You'll go, won't you? Come on, there's a dear."

Marian fixed enraged eyes upon her.

"Most certainly not. I'm no cat's-paw. You know no one ever asks me out."

"Here's your chance. You may have Farrar. He's the nicest. I'll tell him — Heaven sakes, what shall I tell him, Babs? You lie gracefully. Help me out."

"Thanks a lot. You might say — Do you know him, Marian?" she broke off.

Marian shook her head.

"Say she's your house guest and you had to have a man for her."

"Fine!"

"Say she's from the farm (Stanford was known as the farm); one of the sisters. Later she can move up. See?"

"Perfectly. You will, Marian?"

"I will not."

"Oh, please. She may wear your yellow taffeta, mayn't she, Babs?"

"Of course," Babs replied indifferently.

Shu de Li came down the hall.

"I think you're foolish not to, Marian," she said. "You are always complaining about not having a date. Here's your chance. You may have my blue Chinese coat to wear with the dress. Ned's a peach. You'll like him."

For an instant Marian's eyes gleamed. Shu de Li always carried the day.



“Would you really go, if you were I, Shude?”

“Certainly. Wait a minute.” She came running from her room with the coat, and opening the closet door brought out the yellow dress. “Look,” she cried. “Aren’t they stunning? Here’s your chance for an everlasting crush.”

Marian looked at the things longingly.

“All right,” she said, “I will. Who’ll do my hair?”

“I’ve always been considered right good at that,” Caroline offered. She had been looking on with amazed eyes. “But we’ll have to hurry, for I’ve an engagement myself.”

She glanced away from Marian in time to see Barbara Blue’s eye close in a knowing wink.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SORORITY HOUSE

THAT first night in the sorority house was a revelation to Caroline.

In the boarding house, Margaret's dignity had limited the girls' visits to the room. They seldom ran in. There was no borrowing, no congregating for gossip, no fudge making. Once in a while, when Margaret was at the library studying, Caroline made tea for them and passed around cookies, but they seldom lingered longer than to dry the cups and saucers and put the room to rights.

Reared, too, in a family where dignity was the keynote, Caroline stood aghast at the familiarity that thrust itself upon Marian Burdick's entrance into college society. Girls came trooping from the first and second floors, eager to have a share in making her popular.

"Don't you want my yellow silk hose, Marian?" one called, and another, "Those satin slippers of mine just match Bab's dress; take 'em if you like!" They even brought lingerie. Soft silken stuff, fragrant as flowers.

Marian sat before the mirror while Caroline



combed and brushed. The long black hair, attractive in its burnished, wiry way, was coiled becomingly. The girls were loud in their praise. "Stunning!" they exclaimed, running back and forth to see how things were progressing. "My, what a difference it makes in you! Now always do your hair that way, Marian. Get Caroline to show you."

Gradually Marian began to stretch butterfly wings. She was not a plain girl, by any means. Her features were small and even. Her forehead, centered evenly with a peak of dark hair, highly intellectual; her eyes large and glowing. Shed of unnecessary clothing, her slender form took on a graceful outline.

"My word, your own mother wouldn't know you!" Susan said, eying her proudly. "I see my finish. Farrar's gone!" She wafted a kiss through the window in the direction of his fraternity house and turned Marian about for further inspection.

"I say, girls, won't she make a hit? You dance well, too, Marian; light as a feather."

Compliments flew thick and fast. A flush warmed Marian's cheeks; her eyes danced. Some one called Mrs. Rankin. She noted the change with pleasure.

The breakfast table hummed the next morning with the triumph.

"Really," Susan said between crunches of toast, "it was wonderful! Ned took to her like a flash. She struck his hobby before they reached the



dance: photography, wasn't it, Marian? They're going off this afternoon to take some shots."

The first two or three weeks were daily periods of adjustment for Caroline. Sometimes she wondered why she had moved, but her love for the girls grew, and that, together with her loyalty, compensated for things lost.

Susan was even more of a trial than she had promised. There were moments when Caroline felt that she could not live in the disorderly room. Susan's faults were legion. She was irresponsible. She was always late; always out of money; always borrowing. On the other hand, she was as eager to lend as she was to borrow. She was never too busy to work a hard problem (a genius in mathematics); to translate Greek or Latin; to do a favor.

She was so clean-minded that one forgave her shortcomings. She was innately refined; courteous, in some ways thoughtful. And she loved the outdoors with a passion that consumed her.

"See what I brought you, Cal dear," she would say, after walking off with Caroline's umbrella, sweater, or best hat. The gift might be only a flower, a yellow plume from an acacia tree, a bunch of gorgeous leaves, but it was presented as a treasure, and as such Caroline accepted it. The room always held something of the outside; vases were never empty — and never full; that was another of Susan's eccentricities. Two or three flowers satisfied her; one bright leaf gave her as much joy as ten.



She had more friends among the men than any girl in the house. They liked to talk with her; liked her intelligent comments, her good-natured criticisms. She had fewer "crushes" than Barbara Blue, or even Shu de Li Winston; she was too interested in topics of general interest to become sentimental.

On the whole, however, she was less of a trial than Barbara. It did not take Caroline long to discover that Barbara did not like her. If she entered a room when Barbara was talking, Barbara stopped and moved away. If Barbara planned a frolic, she left Caroline out.

As the weeks grew into months, the situation was made worse by a certain rivalry between them. Caroline grew in popularity. Girls who had sat at Barbara's feet and admired her clothes, her style, her *savoir faire*, transferred their admiration to Caroline.

"I don't know what on earth I've done to Barbara," Caroline said one evening in desperation to Shu de Li. Shu de Li's room was the only one in the house that boasted an open fire, and the girls were toasting marshmallows on the red coals.

"Don't you, really, Cal?" Mrs. Ravenel would have been appalled to hear her daughter's name contracted so unceremoniously.

"No, Shu de Li."

Shu de Li always loved the sound of her name on Caroline's lips. She pronounced it so perfectly, "Shu de Lee," giving each syllable equal value.



“You took Biddy away from her.”

“Took him away —”

“He was her shadow last year. Everybody here in the house thought they were engaged.”

“Oh, Shu de Li, I’m so sorry. Why didn’t you tell me?”

Shu de Li shrugged.

“All’s fair in love —”

“But I’m not a bit in love with him. I only like him.”

“Evidently he prefers you.”

The next Sunday evening Caroline tried her best to bring Biddy and Barbara together. When Biddy dropped in for tea — men were always dropping into the sorority house for tea on Sunday evenings — she went upstairs and knocked on Barbara’s door. “Won’t you come down and help me make cinnamon toast for three hungry men?” she asked.

Barbara rose from the couch where she had been reading a novel, went to the mirror, gave herself several pats, fluffed her hair, threw a fetching silk scarf around her shoulders and turned toward the stairs. She did not inquire who the men were. Men always meant conquest to Barbara. She did not see Biddy until she had spoken with Billy Bolland and Billy’s friend, Smith Talmage. When she spied him her face paled a little.

It was a custom in the house to engage seats in desirable places for Sunday night tea by means of signs pinned conspicuously. To-night the davenport before the fire read: “Caroline and



Billy; Smith and Shu de Li; Biddy and Babs."

Barbara read the notices with a fluttering heart. She seemed embarrassed.

"Babs," Caroline called, on the way to the kitchen, "entertain Biddy for a minute while Shude and I make the toast. Billy and Smith will help us."

It took some time to cream the sugar and cinnamon, prepare salad and hot cocoa. When the four returned to the living room, Biddy and Babs were in a heated conversation. They were flushed and ill at ease.

Biddy jumped up and took the tray from Caroline; Billy got out a nest of tables and put them before the guests. Supper was served.

It was later that night that Caroline answered a rap at her bedroom door. Barbara stood outside, her silken rose-colored bathrobe clutched about her.

"I just wanted to say," she began, white with anger, "that when I want Biddy Webster to dance attendance, I can get him without your help. Kindly keep out of my affairs after this."

Caroline shrank back as if from a blow. Susan opened sleepy eyes and inquired about the trouble.

"Trouble is, I don't want any little match-makers using me for copy," Babs flung.

"Oh, Barbara, how horrid of you!" Susan called, thoroughly awake. "Go back to your room. You're not going to bully Caroline like that. I won't stand for it."

"Stop, Susan, please—" Caroline began.



But Barbara had crossed the hall and noisily slammed her door.

Barbara did not appear at breakfast. Marian carried up her toast and coffee on a tray. She gave Caroline a haughty look as she passed her. Marian and Babs might quarrel furiously, but they always managed to champion each other in outside difficulties. On the campus Caroline passed Biddy. He went by her and then came back. His face had lost its sunny smile.

"What kind of an affair were you staging last night?" he asked. "I was invited to tea with you."

"So were Billy and Smith," Caroline retaliated, tired of the whole disagreeable affair.

Biddy, hurt, turned on his heel and walked swiftly in the other direction. Caroline reached her English lecture with her head held high.

A rather unhappy week followed. Barbara was barely civil. Caroline comforted herself by spending as much time as possible with Margaret. Occasionally she went home with her and sat for a while in the large clean room overlooking the bay. Margaret's companionship was a healing balm.

Sometimes they talked of the future. When Caroline spoke of "next year" Margaret's face clouded.

"There won't be a 'next year' here, for me, Caroline," she remarked. "I shall have to teach for two or three years before I can come back and take up law."

"Perhaps, as my father often says, a way will



open," Caroline suggested hopefully. "I remember once when I was a child and Major was dreadfully ill, we sold our home almost over night, and moved to Colorado. I sometimes wonder if things aren't fore-ordained—that angels keep giant blue prints in heaven and mark out mortals' destinies."

Margaret was skeptical.

"Anyway, the idea would make a good play," Caroline said with her usual utilitarian spirit. "It gives me an idea."

There had been but little time in the days' routine to think of plays, but germs lay dormant in the busy brain, ready to spring into life when the time was ripe. Caroline never for a moment lost sight of her goal. Some day she would be a playwright.

Often Margaret came to the sorority house to lunch. Sometimes Caroline brought other girls from the boarding house, rather to their surprise.

"We supposed when Caroline joined a sorority she would have no time for us," they said. "But it doesn't seem to have made the slightest difference in her."

They scarcely realized the effort Caroline put forth to be kind, for sorority girls naturally flock together. When she went to the boarding house, she left her sorority pin at home, she never flaunted it. She seldom wore it on the campus, proud as she was of it. She had learned to dread the look that crept into the eyes of the girls who had been dropped as noneligibles. She knew



many of them; some had shared the rushing with her, falling out of the race, hurt and humiliated.

And yet the sorority meant more to her each day. Initiation had opened new avenues of thought, stimulated ideals. She felt her obligations more keenly, not only to the sisters, but to the whole campus. She saw girls made stronger through association; better students; better friends. She found that the give and take of sorority life strengthened character.

There were a number of cases in point: On the third floor there was a large sunny apartment known as the flatiron room, because of its odd shape. Three girls shared it: Estelle Moreland, a Senior; Nell Neally, a Junior, and Betty Carew, a Sophomore. The older girls were of the highest type on the campus, well-born, excellent students, prominent in college activities.

Betty Carew's freshman days had been a series of escapades and frivolities. Barely eighteen in her sophomore year, too pretty and irresponsible to attend a coeducational institution, her history had been rather unenviable. Her indiscretions were never serious enough to merit dismissal, but they were harmful enough to bring discredit upon the house.

Estelle Moreland volunteered to leave her comfortable quarters on the second floor — a privilege enjoyed only by Seniors — and room with Betty. Nell Neally suggested the flatiron room, and offered to share it with the other two.

The friendship that ripened between the three



surprised the house. Six months' association with high-minded, conscientious girls had raised Betty's standards, sorted her values, made a student of her. The flatiron room became the most popular place in the house. Betty's allowance, a shameful amount for a young girl, had turned it into a luxurious apartment. A large closet was converted into a bathroom; charming rugs covered the floor; the three beds, alike (Betty's in the middle), were handsome and comfortable. Flowers bloomed in the windows; books filled cases; Betty's baby grand piano fitted into the flatiron as if the corner had been made for it.

Silly flirtations ceased. For two hours every afternoon, Betty's music (she was very gifted), filled the halls and bedrooms. Her outside engagements lessened. Her evening trips to the library were made with Estelle and Nell; her visits to the city across the bay always chaperoned.

Caroline loved the flatiron room. It was a haven after her own, strewn with Susan's belongings. Often she flung herself into one of Betty's deep chairs and solaced herself with Betty's music.

"You don't know what a joy it is to come in here," she said one day to Betty.

"Yes, I think I do know," Betty said; "it's so far from the girls, so quiet and restful that one has time to think. I am sure that my whole future will be colored and glorified by these four



walls — and the friendship of the girls who have made the old room livable.”

And influence had been brought to bear upon Barbara Blue. She had been closeted for hours with Hannah Rosser; an apology being the result. It was not an apology from the heart, but rather from a perturbed conscience. One of those apologies that vindicate one's self rather than the one offended.

“I am sorry,” Barbara said to Caroline, “that you made so much out of what I said the other night and have been so cool to me. You'll have to get used to my disposition and not take offense when I explode. My middle name's dynamite.”

Caroline's acceptance did not help matters.

“Don't mention it,” she said; “the matter was really of so little consequence.” Then, seeing Barbara's chagrin, she took her hand and grasped it in a tight squeeze. “Let's forget it,” she said, and smiled her charming, winsome smile.



## CHAPTER XIV

### CAROLINE CAUSES A PANIC

COMING in from the theater rather late one night, Caroline found the house in a tremor of excitement. Bedroom doors were ajar; lights gleamed under those that were closed.

“What’s the matter?” she asked, stopping to speak with Shu de Li.

“Nothing, my dear,” Shu de Li’s tones were scornful. “Nothing at all. Tommy came home a little while ago and took a fit down in the living room; on the way to the kitchen for a drink she thought she saw a man dodge into the dining room. Izzy Morrison telephoned the police. Awful row. Ridiculous!”

“That’s all right for you, Shude, never afraid of anything, but I tell you I did see him — and one of the men that came found a window open.” Tommy’s tones were indignant.

“Shude thinks because she lived in China, where everything is as safe as a church, nothing can happen here —”

“Not at all, my dear. I only say that a burglar wouldn’t scare me. They’re like snakes; let them prowl and they won’t hurt you.”



"But who wants them carrying things off? All my jewelry is in my top drawer —"

"You shouldn't have jewelry at college; bad taste."

"Thanks, old dear!"

"Fact, but I'm not going to stand here arguing the matter. I'm cold. Cheer up, Tommy; want me to come over and sleep on the couch?"

"What could you do to protect me?"

Shu de Li, awake now and in better mood, kissed the end of her pretty finger and planted it in the dimple that dwelt in Tommy's chin.

"Take that," she said, "and that, and toddle off to bed like the good little angel you are. But don't wake me up again to-night, or I'm afraid you won't like my disposition."

Shu de Li adored her downy couch; her love of creature comfort was something of a joke among her friends.

"Shude would sleep through a fire," Tommy said as she and Caroline walked down the hall. "Her bravado gets on my nerves. I wish she had seen that horrible creature skulking through the hall. Ugh, it makes me sick! I'd love to take her unaware some time; wish we could get a dummy or something."

Caroline's eyes flashed a sympathetic smile.

"Come into my room a minute," she said, the "coffee grounds" in her amber eyes spreading with mischief. "I've got an idea."

Susan's bed was not occupied.

"Reckon she's out star-gazing or bug-gather-



ing," Caroline remarked, taking off her evening coat and hanging it away. "Wait until I'm comfy in my slippers and bathrobe and then we'll cogitate." Her smile changed to a challenging grin.

For the next ten minutes the only sounds that broke the stillness were the clock in the downstairs hall striking twelve and Caroline's low giggle.

"Are you game, Tommy?" she questioned. "It's going to take a little nerve, but I'll wager Shude won't say again that she isn't afraid of night prowlers."

Tommy departed to her own room for a few minutes, coming back with a box of make-up under her wide kimono sleeve. A few minutes later they made another pilgrimage, arm in arm, suppressing the laughter occasioned by each creak in the telltale stairs. Several times they were so overcome with hilarity that they stopped and leaned against the wall for support.

"Caroline, don't, please — Mrs. Rankin — remember —"

And Caroline would brace up and take another creaky step.

It took time, fumbling in the dark, to find the houseman's coat and hat which he often left behind the kitchen door, but Tommy was at last successful. She took it down, her nose lifted in disgust. "Awfully smelly," she sniffed — "furnace and bad tobacco; think you'll mind?"

"I'll put a clean handkerchief in the hat, and



the coat will be all right over a white waist; Shude won't be too critical —"

More giggles.

A half-hour passed while Tommy worked diligently. When she gave Caroline the hand mirror and told her to view herself, Caroline blinked unbelievably.

"Tom, how did you do it! I'm a scream! The mustache is perfect and I love the eyebrows; they're the real thing, so bushy and burglary! Oh, wait a minute. I have something else. The very thing."

She went over to her dresser drawer and took out a pocket flash-light. A few evenings before she had helped Biddy settle Emma's disposition with it, dropping it into her sweater pocket by mistake.

"Don't tell me things are not foreordained," she whispered, trying the light in Tommy's astonished face. "Come on — keep near me, but not too close. Gentlemen burglars are seldom accompanied by kimono-clad females. Are we ready? March!"

With lockstep and smothered laughter they started across the hall.

Tommy stopped and executed one of her dancing bounds in the direction from which they had come. She was back with another leap.

"Here, you forgot this!" She tied a red handkerchief over the lower part of Caroline's face. The procession moved again. At Shude's door it halted. Tommy was doubled up with laughter.



"Oh, Caroline," she whispered between gasps, "you're the most adorable man I ever looked at. You won't scare Shude a bit. She'll faint in your arms!"

It took several attempts to control their laughter, but Caroline finally straightened.

Tommy opened the door. The room was as still as a tomb. Caroline stepped in, moved about cautiously for a moment. She had flashed her light and was about to bend over Shu de Li when the most terrified scream she had ever heard pierced the air. It was followed by another — and yet another. The cry was taken up along the hall. Some one on the sleeping porch added "fire" at the top of her lungs.

Tommy, realizing Caroline's danger, grabbed her by the houseman's odorous coat.

"The bathroom!" she whispered. "Quick! You must get out of those clothes! Hurry, hurry, here comes Mrs. Rankin!"

"He's in here, I heard the door close," came in Shu de Li's matter-of-fact tones. "Yes, I'm quite sure. I saw him enter my room and bend over Fanchon's bed. Send for the police, at once!"

On the other side of the bathroom door, Caroline and Tommy looked at each other in dismay.

"Now, don't you worry," Caroline whispered, feeling, rather than seeing, Tommy's fright. "It was all my doing. I'll shoulder the blame — but we must get out of here. I draw the line at being arrested."



Tommy picked up a bath towel and applied it to Caroline's face. It was too dark in the tiny room to see the effect produced, but that was a small matter. The coat and flash light were stuffed into a linen drawer under a pile of towels. Caroline stood slim and straight in her white waist, short petticoat and bedroom slippers.

Tommy opened the bathroom window cautiously. It let in a ray of light. Frightened as she was, Tommy could not repress her laughter.

"Cal dear, if you could just see yourself!"

Despite the noise going on in the hall, she collapsed against the wall and shook until she fell in a heap.

Caroline was less mirthful.

"We've got to get out of this," she said, "and quickly." She spoke in an anxious whisper. "You are sure-footed, Tom; could you — would you dare walk along the ledge outside the window and drop to the kitchen roof below? That's the only chance I see of getting away."

"What would you do?"

"Follow you. I'm not in the least afraid."

Tommy took a look. The noise in the hall was growing louder. Mrs. Rankin was giving directions.

"All right, come along." Tommy squeezed through the small aperture and tested the width of the ledge. "Hold tight," she cautioned.

They had walked to the corner, holding to the house with steady fingers, when Tommy stopped.



"Caroline!" she breathed. "They're coming, the police! What on earth shall we do?"

The clang, clang of the patrol sounded nearer and nearer. It struck terror to Caroline's heart. She looked down at her short silk petticoat and scarlet slippers. Fortunately she could not see her streaked and dirty face. The moustache had only partly vanished. Half of its artistic twist curled on a pallid cheek: a heavy eyebrow had escaped the towel. It still bushed rakishly.

"Heavens, it isn't the police, it's the *fire-engine!*" Tommy gasped. "Suppose they turn the water from that big hose up here! It would whisk us into the bay."

Caroline's chattering answer was lost in the sound of a male voice somewhere below.

"Could I be of assistance?" it asked. "Just a second and I will try to get a ladder."

If the position had not been so altogether perilous, Caroline would have dropped, from sheer embarrassment.

"It's a Phi Psi next door," Tommy muttered, strengthening her slight hold on the house. "Good Lord, what *are* we going to do?"

"Do? We're going to scurry down the ladder as soon as he brings it," Caroline answered. "I wouldn't walk that plank back to the bathroom if every man next door tried to help us. My knees are knocking so I can hardly stand another minute."

The Phi Psi was back quickly. He ran up the ladder and held out a hand. Tommy took it



eagerly. Caroline turned her back and came down with burning cheeks.

The young man would never have known they were burning but for the fire-engine's headlight. It swept them like a gleaming eye. It lit up Caroline's bunchy brow and severed moustache; it touched her slippers with a fiendish glare.

But there was little time to stare. Tommy caught Caroline's arm.

"I believe," she said and gave Caroline a pull, "that we can get up to my room over the fire escape before they get around to the back, if we hurry."

Caroline needed no second invitation.

The Phi Psi strolled around the house. As Caroline made the last round she heard him say, "Trouble's in front, I think, everything's all right here. I've been over the place pretty thoroughly."

She could have embraced him with gratitude.

The third floor was still in confusion. Tommy's roommate had joined the crowd outside. It took but a moment to find a jar of cold cream, to wipe the telltale marks from Caroline's face, put on a bathrobe and stroll out, anxious and heavy-eyed.

In the hall Shu de Li accosted Caroline.

"My word, Cal, you don't mean to say you've slept through all this racket! Where have you been?"

"With Tommy. What happened?"

"Happened! Good heavens! We've had a terrible time. The man Tommy saw down-stairs



in the dining room came back, got into our room, flashed a light at Fanchon —”

“So there really was a burglar?”

“Was there? Well, rather! Fanchon’s in a terrible way, scared into hysterics; doctor’s with her now.”

From behind Shu de Li’s closed door came moans and shrieks.

“It’s awful,” Shu de Li said, wringing her hands in sympathy. “Mrs. Rankin says she once knew a girl who lost her mind through just such a scare. If Fan isn’t better soon, they’re going to telephone over to the city for her mother.”

“Goodness, is it that bad?” Caroline’s face was troubled.

“*Bad?* It’s terrible! But we have a fine description of the man; Fan and I both saw him. Young, rather — and,” Shu de Li lowered her voice — “terribly good-looking, what we could see of him. He had a handkerchief over the lower part of his face —”

“Could — could you identify him?”

Tommy made a dash for the stairs. Halfway down she stopped and doubled up, then shaking, made her way on down. Caroline’s expression never changed.

“I think so. He had a moustache, rather French, curled, you know, and very heavy eyebrows. We had the curtains up and the room was rather light —”

“You saw him clearly, then?”

“Oh, yes. He paused at my bed as if a little



uncertain of his movements, then moved towards Fan's. I had not been sound asleep — just dozing —”

“I see.”

Shu de Li hurried on. “I want to get the things I threw out of the window,” she explained. “Some of my best clothes are out on the lawn. Everybody dumped everything when the fire engine came.” She leaned against the wall for a minute and laughed nervously. “They say Betty Carew tried to carry out her grand piano and Nell Neally saved the shade to the lamp. I can laugh now, but —”

She ran down the stairs lightly and Caroline went into the bathroom. It was deserted. Quickly she opened the drawer where the houseman's hat and coat lay. She rolled the coat in a ball, having tucked the hat inside, and tossed the bundle through the open window.

Turning, she drew a long sigh.

“Well, that's that!” she said below her breath. “I'm done with burglaring!”

The breakfast table hummed with excitement next morning. In the midst of bacon and soft boiled eggs some one brought in the paper.

“Here it is, bold as life and twice as natural. Heavens, Shude! Here's your picture!” Nell Neally read on:

“Daring robbery planned at prominent sorority house on Channing Way; frightened girls' screams rouse the house. Fire alarm given. Burglar chased by Miss Shu de Li Winston, beau-



tiful daughter of Tyler Drew Winston, formerly connected with the Embassy at Peking, China. No shots fired. Man escapes but police have accurate description —”

Tommy left the table hurriedly, her hand on her stomach.

“Poor Tom,” some one said kindly, “fright always gives her indigestion. What’s your hurry, Caroline?”

In the midst of the pandemonium that followed, Susan Stirling walked in, tired and a little disheveled.

“What’s up?” she inquired, taking her place at table. “I did a risky thing last night; fell asleep under a tree on the hill — watching for that new star Howe’s found; caught cold, I’m afraid — Good heavens, Nell, what’s happened? You all look like ghosts!”

The sequel to the event came a few weeks later, a sequel much pleasanter than Caroline hoped for — or deserved.

In hurrying across the campus, she was hailed by Tommy — Tommy with a very good-looking young man in tow.

“Cal, dear,” she called, “stop a minute! I want to introduce Mr. Forbes — Ranson Forbes.”

Tommy made the introduction and looked around cautiously.

“We owe Mr. Forbes a debt of gratitude; it was he who helped us out the other night — Ssh, here comes Susan.”

Susan passed with a wave. Tommy went on:



“Got the ladder, you know. He’s promised not to tell — ever!”

Caroline’s face was as vivid as the slippers she had worn at her last meeting with Mr. Forbes, but she held out a grateful hand. “You’re a good sport,” she said and meant it. “If ever I can help you — you see that was *my* escapade — I inveigled Tommy —”

“Tommy was a willing victim,” that young lady interrupted.

“Everything’s all right now; no bad effects?” Ranson inquired.

“Everything’s fine. Fanchon’s better — says she’s rather glad it happened, on the whole — burnt child never dreads the fire, you know — and it gave the house something to talk about for days.”

“No trace of the burglar?”

“Not yet.”

“You think they are still looking?”

“Scarcely. You see —” it was Caroline who lowered her voice this time and looked about — “you see, there was a policeman in the lower hall, a nice fat paternal-looking one who might have had girls of his own. And I — I — please don’t be shocked — I gave him a wink as I passed him — a good honest one. They stopped searching immediately.”

Ranson threw back his head and laughed, and Caroline hurried on to her next class.

On Sunday evening Ranson was invited to the sorority house for tea. As he was leaving, he



said to Caroline, "How about seeing the crew races this week? Father has a launch that he has turned over for the day. Some of the fellows and girls are going. Glad to have you share the fun."

The festivities began the night before the races. Caroline had accepted an invitation to Biddy's "Formal", arriving home at two in the morning—not an unusual hour to return from such a function. The girls were still up, her own particular crowd, waiting to discuss the various parties they had attended. Tommy had hot chocolate going in the electric chafing dish; Shu de Li had donated sandwiches and cream puffs.

It was quite four o'clock when Caroline crept across the hall and into her deserted bed. She arose at six, more sleepy than when she retired, but she pattered across the room and flung the window blind high to consult the weather.

The sun was coming up bright and clear; not a sign of fog or rain. As Biddy had prophesied, "California was on the job."

It took some minutes to do her hair becomingly, but she was ready at last, trig and charming in a suitable sport suit. Hannah's permission had been gained the night before so there was nothing to do but fly for the six-twenty train to the ferry, and ride in an aroma of ham and eggs with the workmen who were commuting to San Francisco.

Ranson was waiting at the flower stand with a gorgeous bunch of violets and chrysanthemums.



Caroline buried her face in the blue-and-gold beauties and pinned them in her belt. At the dock they found the rest of the party, eager for the morning's excitement.

Caroline had never sailed in a launch before, and the little boat, brave in its fresh white paint and green trimmings, delighted her. Ranson showed her the cabin with its pretty wicker furniture and gay draperies; its tiny open deck. He even let her take a turn at the wheel as they cut in and out among the vessels in the bay,—a thrilling experience.

It was a perfect morning. The sluggish water of the tranquil bay shimmered in the sunshine. Sea gulls hovered about, stopping now and then to catch a ride on the moving water's breast.

Caroline's glance strayed over the bay. At her right a picturesque old vessel from the Orient rocked quietly, restlessly, as if teasing to be released from its anchorage. There were merchant ships, each flying the symbol of its country; already the bay was alive with the launches carrying the enthusiastic California rooters.

"Get ahead there!" said Randall to the pilot. "We've as much right to lead as any," and the little craft snorted with a spurt of approval.

It was a shifting, brilliant, colorful scene. Motor patrols plied in and out, guarding the Estuary to prevent collisions; on either bank similar difficulties were being encountered with automobiles.

As Ranson's boat glided along, the guests on



its little deck glimpsed numerous classmates. Caroline's heart pounded when she heard a shrill whistle and turning, beheld Biddy at a distance draped on the Emma's fender. She waved him a hearty salute.

And Biddy's heart leapt from a condition of calm repose to a more or less annoying flutter as he watched Caroline, the wind flapping her coat in graceful curves behind her, her upturned black and white sailor hat, her pleated flannel skirt, dark hose and spotless white oxfords—even whiter in the sunshine—silhouetted against the ever-changing background.

Ranson's boat reached its limit, idling at an advantageous point. A short distance ahead the crew was preparing for the start. The gun was fired and as soon as the launch was permitted, it followed.

A burst of enthusiastic cheers left the banks and rippled up the Estuary with the old support that California always gave. The race was on!

Caroline watched it breathlessly, her body tense, her hands gripped together, a flush traveling beneath the warm tan of her cheeks. Only once did she waver—when California's shell had barely half its length in gain: two of her men had given out, leaning limply on their knees.

Ranson's piercing yell brought back her courage.

"California, California! Keep it up! Come on, Cal! Nearly there! Nearly there! Don't weaken!"



Unexpectedly the gun was fired. A ripple of dismay uttered by the scattered Stanfordites was drowned in the whistles and shrieks of the victorious Californians.

But the day was not over yet. Caroline reached the sorority house at twelve-thirty. The outcome of the races had not dampened the spirits of Stanford guests, for, according to custom, the visiting chapter was harbored for the occasion.

"Come out into the kitchen," Shu de Li whispered to Caroline. "Gee's run out of chocolate, and only half the guests have been served. By the way, Cal, you looked a million on the boat this morning. Where *did* you get that hat?"

The chapter room swarmed with girls, laughing and chatting. Amateurish strains of jazz strayed from the open house next door. Freshmen hurried about serving a buffet luncheon. Excitement was still in the air.

"Get a move, Babs," Tommy called, passing through the room with a Stanford friend. "You've just time to powder your nose and get to Cal field for the meet."

Tommy's warning started others. There was an exodus to up stairs chambers for final feminine touches and brilliant sweaters. The procession moved campusward.

Caroline arrived at the field in ample time to see Stanford carry off the day's honors. From somewhere in the mob Biddy suddenly appeared,



bringing the opponent's football captain with him.

"How about finding one of your sisters for Baldwin," he asked, "and we'll have a foursome dinner across the bay?"

Caroline recalled Shu de Li's disappointed and somewhat anxious face when she left her at the house. The man who had asked her for the evening's celebration had given out in the morning's race.

There was another hurried change of toilet. Caroline donned a girlish gown of black velvet, made so simply that its richness passed unnoticed. Alison's gift it was, and Leigh's clever fingers had, as usual, transformed it. For once, old gold had been discarded for a soft, periwinkle blue; the sleeves that fell away from the elbows were lined with it, and there were touches on soft panels that parted as Caroline danced, giving a fleeting glimpse of color.

Biddy's eyes followed her proudly as she danced with his friend, and others watched the lithe, erect figure with head swaying like a flower above the slender brown throat.

Shu de Li, too, was looking her best in a lace and rose taffeta gown; Neal Baldwin seemed perfectly content with Caroline's selection.

The dining room was filled with University students in parties of four, six and eight. But there were no demonstrations. It was a happy, light-hearted, almost dignified crowd, still in a receptive, if not hilarious mood.

Caroline reached home after midnight and still



too excited to sleep, chronicled the day's happenings in a bulky letter home.

Her twenty-four hours, packed to the brim, thus passed into family history.



## CHAPTER XV

### A FRIEND IN NEED

CAROLINE often wondered how she would have endured the pangs of homesickness that sometimes attacked her if it had not been for Mrs. Colfax and her interesting family.

Their home lay at the outskirts of a neighboring city, so that it took some time by rail or motor to reach it, but the latchstring was always out, a warm Southern handshake awaiting her.

In many respects Mrs. Colfax was a remarkable woman. To live in the house with a son and daughter-in-law and keep their unalterable affection proved the assertion.

The house was wide and roomy; the families kept very much to themselves except at mealtime, when they all gathered in the long dining room and chatted merrily over the day's happenings.

Caroline loved those gatherings. The conversation ranged from stocks and bonds to the latest play and opera. Mrs. Colfax never lost her interest in the world about her. She had been a gifted singer in her day and the love for good music, in fact a comprehending knowledge of all the arts, was a part of her very being. She was an authority on operatic favorites, celebrated actors, noted



playwrights. She was a sparkling conversationalist, a rare hostess.

The simple dignity of the family life, the negroes moving softly about their work, the quaint old furniture that lent a peculiar Southern charm and atmosphere, made Caroline feel at home. Romping with the Barker children in the nursery was a joyous innovation in college life; talking with Preston Barker about literature (he had once been a college professor), science, even religion, was a stimulating privilege.

But perhaps, best of all, were the long visits before Sally's open fire, after the family had retired. There, sorority matters could be discussed.

"It is about time Hannah was giving you a new roommate," Sally ventured one night. "Everybody knows that Susan is utterly impossible."

"Some one has to room with her," Caroline said, looking dreamily into the fire; "why not I?"

"Favors like that should be passed around," Sally remarked a bit sarcastically.

"Susan has seemed very troubled lately; sometimes I feel sorry for her."

It was the very next afternoon on her way home to the sorority house that she discovered Susan's difficulty. Caroline had stopped in town to do a little shopping. In crossing a main thoroughfare, she came upon Susan. Sometimes in after years the vision that met her eyes that foggy, gray afternoon, would bring sudden laughter.



A silvery mist was surging in from the bay, a wet, uncomfortable mist that sent people hurrying home shivering. Susan, as usual, was without a hat. Her thick ropes of taffy hair were wet and stringy. Her green sweater, thin and sagging, was held together by a sorority pin, one button and an honor emblem that dangled loosely from a little chain. Her keen eyes had lost their sparkle. But it was not her costume that made Caroline laugh. That sent a pang to her heart.

In her arms Susan was carrying a bird cage. She had thrown an old scarf over the wires to protect Dickey from cold and fright, but a sorrowful peep now and then betrayed his anxiety. Caroline stopped still in the street and stared.

"Susan, for goodness' sake, what are you doing out this kind of a day with that bird!" she exclaimed.

Caroline was fond of Dickey. He always hung near the sunniest window in the bedroom; sometimes when she was very tired, his tweets and thrills got on her nerves, but not often.

Susan assumed a stoical expression quite foreign to her sympathetic countenance.

"I have been trying to sell him, Cal dear," she said. "Strange, but nobody seems to want him. And he's such a fine specimen (everything was a specimen to Susan's scientific mind), a German roller, you know."

"But why do you want to sell him?"

"I must have some money — to-day."



“Why to-day?”

“Because I owe it.”

“To whom?”

“Babs. She needs it to pay on a dress she’s having sent over from the city —”

“Oh, Susan, why do you do it?”

“Do what?”

“Keep up this awful borrowing. See where it puts you.”

“I know; I’m very careless, but so is father. I suppose he’s got his head in some new experiment and forgotten that I am on earth. He does sometimes. I haven’t had a remittance for some time. I suppose if mother were living —”

“How much do you need, Susan?”

“Twenty-five dollars.”

Caroline took the bird cage, lifted the scarf and peeked at Dickey. He was huddled in a heap at the bottom of the cage. She whistled to him. His responsive trill was melancholy.

“I will lend you the money for a week, Susan,” she said, wondering just how she was going to manage. “I’ll make it twenty-six dollars, and you skip over to the telegraph office and send a night letter to your father. Tell him the matter is urgent.” She took a silver dollar from a lean purse.

“Oh, Cal, you’re such a dear! I’d so much rather owe you than Babs. I’d never borrow from her, only that she has so much.”

“I know — too much. It doesn’t bring her happiness — or wisdom.”



"I wish I could afford to give her the money," Caroline thought, as she watched Susan disappear down the street, swinging Dickey a bit precariously, in her relief, "but I can't."

In fact, money matters often worried Caroline. She tried to keep within the limit of her allowance, but things were always coming up unexpectedly: dues and assessments; local charities; bills for cleaning and repairing of clothes. A college girl carrying eighteen hours a week has little time for pressing or mending.

And it was hard sometimes to meet the requirements of girls who had so much more to spend. Their "Let's do this or that" often of necessity met with refusal. "It's good for me to practice self-denial," she would think when she relinquished some cherished scheme. Once in the heart of a lengthy letter the Major found this:

"Emerson was right about the law of compensation. Take the girls here. My roommate has the most brilliant mind on the campus, perhaps — a mind that will take her far, no doubt, but she has no mother, no sense of proportion, no balance. And Barbara Blue: beautiful, clever, rich; but shallow, superficial, selfish. And Betty Carew: talented and ambitious, with more money than she knows what to do with — but an orphan!

"And me, without much money, but you and mother — and a background that I can lean against without feeling it will give way and let me through. What's money in comparison! Money! I am beginning to hate it, Major, except for the good it can do. There's something so cheap about it — it seems to so often defeat, rather



than accomplish. Sometimes I am amazed to see how it is thrown away; perishable evening dresses at absurd prices; two motor cars where one would be an extravagance; more food than people can consume comfortably and decently. And then I think of that little spot of ground tucked away beneath the trees on the west side at home, with its sweeping view of the mountains, its bubbling spring, its fresh breezes, and of the little sanitarium we're going to build for people who have struggled for fresh air as you have — when our ship comes in."

There was one period at the house that everybody hated. The week that brought mid-term examinations. Every one was worried; every one was cross — every one but Susan, who relished them as most people do roast beef. Her nonchalance was often irritating.

It was a week of late hours, strong coffee and ragged dispositions. Sometimes there were all-night sessions. It was Nell Neally who one morning appeared at the breakfast table looking pale and hollow-eyed with a placard about her neck which read, "Cram full, don't joggle!" Cramming was in the air.

Caroline had her share of worries. She had managed so far to escape the dreaded "cinches" that disgraced the house and took away privileges, but her subjects were growing harder all the time.

She had done well in her English. In fact, she herself scarcely knew how well. Sometimes a returned paper marked "Well done" or "Orig-



nalinity of thought'' gave her a thrill, but she had no way of knowing that occasionally her papers were passed from one professor to another and commented upon flatteringly.

It was strange, since she and Barbara Blue were rivals in so many things, that they should be, to a certain extent, rivals also in English. Barbara wrote cleverly, with sparkling epigrams and entertaining comments. Caroline's work went deeper. She was more analytical, more comprehending, better versed, thanks to the Major, in the classics.

They attended the same class, though they seldom sat together. Biddy had renewed his attentions to Caroline, and Barbara kept a safe distance. She was accepting the attentions of a sophomore with whom Caroline had repeatedly refused to go out.

A three-cornered enmity had developed that sometimes annoyed Caroline. When she passed Barbara and Harold Dwight on the campus an almost insulting flicker of amusement flashed between them. Caroline pretended not to see it, but it left a sting.

The spring mid-term examination in English was unusually difficult. Caroline wrote steadily, stopping now and then to glance away into space while she marshalled her thoughts. Once or twice she found Harold Dwight's eyes upon her. There was an expression in them that she did not like: a crafty, malicious light.

She watched him as he took his paper to the



desk and spoke with the instructor. Ordinarily the room was free from proctors, for the university practised an honor system among its students.

For an instant the teacher's eyes swept the room. Caroline was included in a surprised stare.

She thought little about it. Finishing her work, she took her paper to the desk and filed it under the "R's."

It was her last examination and with a feeling of relief, she left the building.

She wandered into the Glade and sat down by the brook to cool her aching head. It was mid-March and the flowers were peeping up from the grass with fresh color. The trees had leafed in bolder green and the brook had risen. It was a delightful place to rest and dream. She got out her notebook after awhile and scribbled a letter to Mayre. The Glade always put her in touch with Mayre. She liked to write her of its sylvan charms.

She was not surprised after an hour or two's loitering to see Biddy striding toward her.

"We're getting up a dance out at the country club to-night," he said, dropping a pile of books and sitting down on the grass beside her. "Stepping to-night?"

Caroline shook her head.

"How about it?"

"You're inviting me?"

"Of course."



“I should love it.”

“Fine. See you at eight-thirty, then. Mother’s coming in this afternoon, and I’ve got to take Emma down to meet her.”

She watched him as he walked away, brisk and alert. He was very engaging.

It was almost dinner time when she reached home. There was something about the atmosphere of the living room that reminded her of the night of her arrival. Girls were darting back and forth with suit cases and traveling bags (it was Friday); the piano was going merrily. Some one called from the living room:

“Cal, dear, Susan got her check this afternoon and has gone over to the city to spend the weekend at a hotel with some friends from the East. She left a note for you with Mrs. Rankin.”

Caroline climbed the stairs wearily. Examinations were fagging. She felt depressed, too, as if a cloud were descending upon her.

“I’m just homesick,” she thought, trying to throw off the mood. “It always gives me a pang to see the girls going home.”

Mrs. Rankin handed her a letter. It was sealed, and she took it to her own room for a quiet perusal.

Susan had written hastily:

“Here’s your money, old dear, thanks a million! Father came through generously. I had a call from the city at noon, saying some friends were at the Fairmont, and to come over and spend Sunday with them. You won’t mind, but the in-



visitation came so suddenly that I had to borrow some things from you. I hope that you weren't going to need your yellow chiffon and the brown dinner dress. One does have to tog out at a hotel — especially for the dinner dances. Would have borrowed Shu de Li's but they don't fit. Love. Susan."

"P.S. Please don't forget to give those toads in jars marked 4 and 5 fresh water each day and feed Dickey."

Caroline dropped down on a chair and looked about. If a cyclone had struck the room, it could not have been in greater disorder. Drawers were open; books lay scattered; clothes hung from chairs.

Her cheeks burned with anger, then drained to a deathly pallor. She did not wait to take off her coat, but walked straight to the house president's room.

"Hannah," she said, quite calmly, "you will either have to provide me with another roommate or I shall leave the house."

"I know, Caroline," Hannah began soothingly —

"I mean to-day — *now*. I will not sleep in that room another night. It sickens me."

"What has happened?"

Caroline held out the letter. "I'm tired," she said, when Hannah finished it, "tired of having my things borrowed unceremoniously; of having my best clothes and slippers go off to parties without me — my sweaters and coats to ball games.



I'm sick to death of *pests*! Bugs and beetles and flies and reptiles! I'm afraid if you don't take Dickey out of the room this minute, I'll smother him — much as I love him."

Hannah repressed a laugh.

"It's nothing to smile about," Caroline said. "Try it awhile for yourself. I'm through."

She did not stop until she reached the lower floor; she went straight to the telephone, called Biddy's fraternity house (a thing she despised to do) and left word that she would not be able to keep her appointment with him for the evening.

When she reached the room again she threw herself upon her bed and wept bitterly.



## CHAPTER XVI

### JOY AND SORROW

SATURDAY morning brought two surprises. Hannah Rosser and an immediate delivery letter arrived at Caroline's door simultaneously.

Hannah couldn't repress a smile as she looked about the room. Caroline's side was neat and shining,—empty, in fact, for suit cases and bags stood ready for departure.

"I just ran in to tell you, Caroline," Hannah began, "that the girls in the flatiron room insist upon your going in with them. There really should be four girls there, but until the present moment we have never found just the right person. Nell and Estelle are so much older than Betty that it will be fine for her to have a roommate nearer her own age. She is overjoyed at the prospect of having you — has gone out this morning to purchase a bed to match the other two."

Caroline could not speak for a moment. Tears welled in her eyes.

"You are all so kind," she began, but Hannah stopped her.

"You have been a good deal of a martyr, my



dear, we all know that; but Susan needed you — poor Susan!”

“I understand. She needed — some one, surely. I’m really very sorry for having lost my temper last night, but to call off a date because somebody had walked off with your only evening dress — well —”

A laugh finished the sentence.

“I can laugh about it this morning — I couldn’t last night!”

The letter brought even greater amazement. It was a hurried scrawl from Alison. There were few sentences, but they overran four sheets in an angular, almost illegible hand.

“Darling Caroline,” it began, as usual. “Tevis and I are off for the East for a little rest and change of scene. Don’t know just where we shall spend our time; probably where we can get good golf. I find that the Kirtley flesh hounds my poor shoulders and waist and I have to exercise and diet all the time. I am very much worn at present with my social and committee duties. Life is so strenuous here during the winter season. So much entertaining. Tevis is sending you a check for fifty dollars and says to buy yourself something pretty with it. Will try and write you as soon as we are settled, but can give you no definite addresses at present. Always, darling, with enduring love, Alison.”

Caroline fed Dickey and watered the toads and then carried her bags to the flatiron room. Nell received her with open arms.



The cheerful room soothed her as nothing else could. The windows were open and a soft breeze rippled the dainty muslin curtains; fresh flowers lent fragrance; the large center table was neat with its magazines and books, its work baskets and framed photographs. Except for the beds, one might have taken the place for a charming, well-ordered living room.

Nell took the bags.

“We’re giving you the big closet across the hall, Caroline,” she said. “A little inconvenient, but it will be your own, and it locks. We thought, too, we would move two beds to one side, and two to the other. Betty insists upon buying screens for them,—a needless extravagance, but I suppose she might as well spend her money that way as any other. She’s gone out to get them now.”

By noon the place was comfortably arranged. The beds had been pushed back and two handsome Japanese screens concealed them. Caroline’s bureau held her silver and the family photographs. She had her own table beside her bed, her own deep, cosy chair and reading lamp.

“I know now how Elijah must have felt when he was translated,” she said to Estelle.

Later she and Shu de Li went over to the city to shop. Caroline, with Shu de Li’s help, selected a new evening gown. Mayre might not have approved, for Caroline changed the usual order and selected pale blue; a creation that Shu de Li liked. There was enough money left from Tevis’s check



to provide silver slippers and hose. Altogether the experience was delightful and Caroline went home treading air.

Sunday was another happy day. To awaken in a clean, wholesome room, to hear her roommates pattering about with well-bred quietness; to catch one's first glimpse of day through a wide, sunny window and feast for a moment on green hills and swaying trees was a privilege heretofore undreamed of.

But Monday!

Months after, the very sound of Monday brought a tide of blood to Caroline's face — a pounding heart. She had gone home to lunch, blithe and gay. Monday was usually an easy day, for she finished her classes in the morning.

"Heaps of mail for you," Shu de Li called, as Caroline entered the dining room. "Did you get it?"

Caroline turned back. The mail was always piled on a table in the hall and each girl found her own. She picked up the letters: one from her mother; one from Mayre; one from Jimmy. And still another — a typewritten affair in a legal looking envelope. She gazed at it in surprise, breaking the seal wonderingly. It was a note, very brief, asking her to report at one of the seminar rooms on the fourth floor of the library building, at four-thirty o'clock on Monday, the seventeenth of April. It was signed by the secretary of the "Students' Affairs Committee."

Her first impulse was to hand the letter over



to Shu de Li and ask what it meant, but as she entered the dining room she noticed that Barbara Blue was sitting next to Shu de Li; in fact, while reading the letter she had glanced into the room to find Barbara watching her. She stuffed the mail into her deep sweater pocket and began her lunch.

“Not going to read your mail now?” Shu de Li asked, between dainty sips of her vegetable soup. “Aren’t we patient!”

“Think I will wait until I go upstairs,” Caroline said, her brow still puckered in thought.

“Anything go wrong this morning, Cal?” Shu de Li asked, tracing the furrow with an anxious finger. “Don’t frown. It spoils that lovely brown forehead.”

Barbara Blue looked up quickly.

“No — I had a fine morning, thanks. Everything went well.”

Barbara picked up her notebook and left. Shu de Li called down the table, “Anybody using the ‘Peril’ this afternoon, Crewie?” Betty’s name was often twisted.

Betty’s roadster, the “Gray Peril,” so called because of Betty’s reckless driving, was at the disposal of the house.

“No, take it if you like,” came the cordial answer.

“I must run into Oakland for some shopping. Want to come, Cal?”

“Not this afternoon — thanks. I have an engagement.”



“Terribly sorry.” Shu de Li blew a kiss from the tips of her rosy fingers and followed Barbara.

Alone in her room, Caroline again read the note. “What can it mean?” she wondered. She scarcely comprehended what her mother and Mayre were saying in their letters; Jimmy’s was put aside for a more propitious moment.

Try as she would she could not throw off a feeling of apprehension. There was something sinister about the envelope; something that spelled disaster. Suddenly her face lighted. Margaret could explain. Margaret knew about all college activities. But her eyes quickly clouded. Monday was Margaret’s hardest day. She never arrived home until dinner time, sometimes not even then.

A misty gray fog was drifting in from the bay. Caroline changed her sweater for a warmer one, found a close-fitting turban that was very becoming, shoved it down over her thick hair (from which little tendrils hung — tendrils that scorned the hat’s confines and curled about her neck and ears) and started forth.

She went straight to the campus, hoping that she might meet Margaret between her classes. After an hour’s unsuccessful wait, she decided to walk — anywhere, any place — to take up the time until four-thirty. She turned toward the hills; there were two hours to spare. Higher up the fog was lifting. She found a dry spot and sat down with her letters. Jimmy’s was unusually interesting. He had quite forgiven her



saucy reply to his, asking for topics of common interest; he even begged for college news.

Mrs. Ravenel's was quaintly characteristic. Beautifully written: her chirography was as clear and legible as steel engraving. But it contained little news; it was made up of affectionate greetings and wise advice. She hoped that Caroline was making progress in her studies; that she was well, free from colds, careful in the selection of her companions.

Caroline smiled as she fitted the letter back into its delicately scented envelope. "Dear mother," she thought, "she's almost an anachronism in these hustling times." With a wave of tenderness she put the letter in her blouse, close to her heart, and turned to the one from Mayre.

Strangely enough, it was always Mayre who gave her the home news — Mayre, who seldom went about, but gleaned social happenings from the society column in the newspapers or at church functions. At present she was busy with her drawings, and — this was such thrilling news, she had been offered a position in the high school to teach drawing for a few hours every afternoon. Her mother could not quite make up her mind to allow her daughter to take a position — to really work, the Major was amply able to provide for his children — but Mayre was so eager to attempt it — to earn the money and continue her studies — perhaps abroad.

At four o'clock Caroline went back to the campus still hoping to run upon Margaret. She



waited as long as she dared, then turned toward the library.

She had three minutes in which to reach the fourth floor, and climbed the stairs quickly; she made it a habit to always be on time. At the top she paused and looked about, a little bewildered. It was a part of the building unfamiliar to her. Her puzzled expression attracted the attention of a youth who was crossing the hall.

"May I be of assistance?" he asked kindly.

"I am hunting the 'Students' Affairs Committee room,' " she said, with a grateful smile.

"Oh, yes; at the end of the hall — to the left."

It was a floor given over to small seminar rooms. Caroline went on down the hall, glancing through the glass doors, scarcely interested and yet wondering what was going on inside. Finally she came to the end room. The glass in the door had a dark curtain drawn across it. The sight of the curtain gave her a start; it seemed ominous. But her head was high when she knocked, her eyes clear and unafraid.

It was a small room she entered, one of the smallest on the floor, and bare, save for an oak table, about which five girls were seated.

Caroline was directed to a seat opposite the table. She gazed straight ahead, interested in the personnel of the group, for they were strong, purposeful looking young women; the better college type.

She scarcely knew what drew her attention to a chair near her own, but upon turning, she found



herself looking into Margaret's puzzled eyes. She started to move closer, but a voice, gentle though firm, asked her to keep the seat to which she had been assigned.

The next five minutes were more interesting than amazing to Caroline. The room was not unattractive; it was under the roof, but a door opened onto a small porch; a door that resembled a dormer window set back into the roof, rather than built out, in true dormer fashion. It was open, and Caroline let her gaze wander to the green hills beyond. The fog had settled again; it hung heavy upon the trees, half obscuring them.

She came back from dreams with the sound of her name:

"Miss Ravenel, will you rise, please?"

She was on her feet instantly, looking at the chairman with clear, expectant eyes.

"I am sorry to tell you, Miss Ravenel," the girl began—and hesitated as she met the clear glance—"that you have been called before this committee for dishonesty in an English examination. What explanation have you to make?"

If the girl had reached out and struck her, Caroline could not have seemed more dazed. She shrank back, clutching at the rim of her chair, as if she had not quite comprehended,—as if the room had gone black and left her groping for light.

But quite as suddenly the reaction came. Her shoulders lifted; her head went up; the specks in the yellow eyes gathered in a storm.



“I beg your pardon,” she began, her surprised tones cutting into the deepening silence. “I beg your pardon — but I think I don’t quite understand —”

She was leaning forward, her eyes — big now, black and questioning — strained to meet those of the chairman. Under the clear glance the girl’s faltered.

She repeated the accusation. It had a staggering effect upon Caroline. She clutched the chair again, as if from a blow.

“You mean — that you are accusing me — *a Ravenel* — of cheating?”

The “*Ravenel*” had slipped out almost unknowingly. It was not of herself she was thinking — not of the Kirtleys! But of her father — the Major. His honest face rose before her. In that terrible, agonizing moment she was living over her childhood, her little girlhood; she was at his knee, lisping after him his code of honor, the code of his father: to be just and loyal, honest and kind —

For a moment the room, the girl, the sting of the blow faded; then the words came back thickly, through a mist:

“You have been called before this committee for dishonesty —”

She was conscious that Margaret had risen; had slipped over beside her and was steadying her; that she had put her hand in hers. Her presence lent courage. Again her shoulders lifted.



"I think," she said slowly, "that you will have to prove that statement — to my satisfaction and to my family's." Then, as if unable to stand longer, she sat down.

The room resumed its deathly silence. On the campus the campanile bells broke in a musical chime. The sweetness stole into the room, filled it with a silvery cadence.

The last note had died when Margaret's name was called. She rose quickly, one hand still on Caroline's shoulder.

"Miss Mackintosh?"

"Yes, Miss Merriton."

"You know Miss Ravenel?"

"Very well, indeed."

"You have known her for some time?"

"Since last August."

"You — you have found her — honest and reliable?"

"I have found her the soul of honor. I could no more believe her guilty of this thing of which she is accused than I could believe such a charge against my own mother."

Margaret Mackintosh's word was not to be taken lightly. Her four years in college had given her creditable standing. No one looking at her could have doubted her sincerity — her loyal friendship.

"Thank you. You are excused." The chairman's voice was calm.

Caroline got to her feet again. The anger had faded from her eyes. There was an appealing



expression now: an expression that went straight to Persis Merriton's heart.

"May I," Caroline began, "ask of just what I am accused — and why?"

"You were reported as having copied from your nearest neighbor in English 4 — last Friday. The papers have been compared; a similarity in the use of words — which might or might not have resulted from using the same set of notes — bears out the suspicion of our informant. Do you recall, Miss Ravenel, who sat next you that morning?"

Caroline's brows contracted. She could see only the face of Harold Dwight, crafty and insolent, as he passed her with his paper on the way to the file. Then suddenly she remembered — remembered the most trivial thing: Barbara Blue had dropped her handkerchief and she had stooped to pick it up, thinking it was her own. She remembered handing it to Barbara and her cool acceptance of it.

"I think," she said after a moment, "it must have been one of my sorority sisters, Barbara Blue."

"Are you in the habit of studying with Miss Blue?"

"No — never."

"Are you friends?"

Caroline hesitated.

"We have never been intimate," she said.

"Have you ever disagreed?"

There was another silence.



“Do you regard Miss Blue as an enemy, Miss Ravenel? Have you cause to so consider her? Answer quickly, please.”

“Miss Blue” — she hated to say it, but honor was at stake — “Miss Blue, I think — has never liked me.”

“Why, Miss Ravenel?”

“I cannot tell you — I must decline. I really cannot.”

“Not even to clear this charge against you?”

“The charge will be cleared, Miss Merriton — without disloyalty — to my sister.”

“Have you any suggestions as to how it may be cleared?”

“Surely my instructor, Professor Wright, will identify my paper. He has spoken to me of my style — my way of saying things.”

“Professor Wright is out of the city. The matter cannot be referred to him at present.”

“Then I shall have to ask you either to wait or take my word — and the word of those who know me.”

Caroline scarcely knew how she left the room. She only knew that Margaret was waiting for her outside; that she guided her down the stairs. For blinding tears had come; she could not see. She remembered Margaret's, “Please, Caroline, buck up, just a little longer — you have been so fine. Just until we leave the campus.” She was conscious of a mighty effort — then Margaret's room — the shelter of those strong, loving arms.

She remembered the dainty tray of food that



Margaret brought to her a little later, though she could not eat, and the long talk that lasted well into morning.

“You must tell me about Barbara Blue, Caroline, so that I can help you,” Margaret begged. “It was her paper they compared to yours; there can be no mistake about that.”

To tell of Barbara’s jealousy, reveal a love affair that had wounded her pride, made her an enemy, seemed a despicable thing to do. Caroline could not bring herself to it. Suppose Barbara were also innocent. Suppose there had been some horrible mistake, suppose Harold Dwight had played them both false—for of course he had been the informant—what could be gained by divulging her unhappy secrets?

“Please do not ask me again, Margaret; I cannot tell you. It would not be fair to Barbara.”

And so the night passed and day broke—for Caroline, gray and desolate.

Margaret Mackintosh realized the gravity of Caroline’s plight better perhaps than any one else—and the injustice of it. Injustice, not from the committee’s standpoint, but from the standpoint of the informant. She felt certain that spite was at the bottom of the whole affair and that Caroline, through an incurred enmity, had been the victim of revenge.

She made up her mind to sift the thing to the bottom, not alone for Caroline’s sake, but for the honor of her Alma Mater.



She was not quite sure why she had been called in to the meeting. She had not known, until she saw Caroline in the committee room, why she had been summoned, though, having herself been a non-voting member from the Junior class the year before, she understood that it must be for a witness.

And even yet, five days after the unhappy affair, she had come to no definite conclusion. Her presence as a friend of the 'accused girl might have been for the committee's own protection — to see that fair play was meted out, or it might have been that the committee felt that she, being an older girl, would talk the matter over with the guilty one and wring a confession from her.

After four years of college life Margaret was a sincerely firm believer in student discipline,—discipline not based on a written constitution or on fixed rules of procedure. The system had been tried with unquestioned success for a number of years. It had developed naturally from the custom of the president's calling upon prominent Seniors to help him in settling difficult problems of student discipline. In time the faculty had decided to take definite actions, legally confirming the president's power to act in student affairs.

The system had its advantages — and its drawbacks. Publicity was never given to disgrace. No one knew what went on in the little room with its drawn blind. If the committee probed with a



thoroughness almost brutal, it had its code of honor; its sense of justice.

But to Caroline, Margaret's assurance that no one — not even her sorority sisters — would know of the disgrace that had come to her gave little comfort. In the eyes of the committee, that fine body of young women, she was under suspicion. The thought humiliated, tortured her.

Primarily, her thought had been to send for the Major, but after the first bitter struggle was over she felt stronger, more independent. She herself would sift the thing out; spare her family the knowledge of her suffering. Each day her courage rose. She did not know, life does not always mark its mile posts, that she was passing through a fire that was to strengthen her, make her finer: fit her for heavier burdens.

She only knew that she was very weary; that grief had taken away something that she could not put back: trust and confidence, an almost childish belief in personal honor. And in place had come suspicion, fear, distrust. Harold Dwight had more to answer for than a mean, contemptible spite. He had planted the seed of doubt in the heart of Caroline's faith. She went about her work each day with a face a little paler, eyes a little heavier, smile a little more wan.

Shu de Li tried to fathom the reason for the change, but she was too considerate to ask questions. One day she said, "Are you not well, Cal dear? You look so tired. Aren't you working too hard?"



Caroline shook her head and left the table hurriedly. Others were watching her; Barbara Blue was always looking at her, but when Caroline caught the anxious gaze, Barbara invariably colored and hastily looked away.

It was two weeks after Caroline had been summoned to the committee room when she was called there again. She scarcely knew in looking back how she had endured the interim. Day by day she had waited for the return of Professor Wright. He was her one hope. She felt that in some indefinable way he would find proof of her honesty. Her reliance rested on a remark he had once made in class.

"What is style in writing?" he asked, and then, in his usual definite way, went on to explain, pausing only long enough to find a homely simile. "Style," he said, "is your laundry mark, the tag that identifies your linen from that of your classmates. It is your individual mark, your stamp, as definite and individual a thing as the number on your handkerchief. Style cannot be mistaken. It is a thing that makes or mars your work. It is God-given, personal, inevitable. There is one paper in this class that I could identify in a thousand—in five thousand. It is stamped with originality, with perception, with talent."

That was her hope, her one slim chance of delivery. She recalled the marginal notes on the papers Professor Wright had returned to her, his definite criticisms; his encouragement.

She entered the committee room with a lighter



step than upon the other occasion; her clear conscience giving her courage to endure the ordeal ahead. The five girls were in their places beside the long, polished table. The window was open. The sun was shining; through the open window a warm breeze strayed, heralding spring. The atmosphere of the room had changed. There was a happy, relieved look on the face of the chairman, and upon the faces of those about her.

“Miss Ravenel,” Miss Merriton began, and her eyes did not falter as before, “we have summoned you this afternoon to say that your instructor, Professor Wright, returned to the campus last night. Your paper was given him for an immediate inspection. He has identified the work as yours — without the shadow of a doubt. He has made this committee feel absolutely sure of your innocence. He has complimented you as a student and — may I add — prophesies that in the years to come you will bring honor to the University.”

But Caroline had dropped back in her chair and covered her face with her hands. The reaction after days of weary waiting had proved too much.

Persis Merriton left her chair to lay a gentle hand on Caroline’s shoulder and continue:

“We, as a committee, are more sorry than we can express to have brought this sorrow and distress upon you, but duty is a stern and relentless taskmaker. Perhaps in future years you may be called upon to serve in our capacity; if so, you will realize how we have suffered with you, but



in any event we believe that, harrowing as the experience has been, you will treasure it as a stepping-stone to broader experiences, wider sympathies, greater understanding. We congratulate you on your forbearance, your patience during these two weeks of uncertainty, and wish you every success and honor that our beloved institution has to offer."

During the recital the girl's voice had dropped to a touching cadence. Looking up, Caroline saw that Persis Merriton was weeping with her.

It was just two days later that Caroline, stopping beside the hall table for her mail, saw an official-looking letter that made her heart bound. It was addressed to Miss Barbara Blue — and marked "Personal."

A half-hour later she met Barbara coming down the stairs with a traveling bag in her hand. She was white and nervous.

"Babs has been called home on account of her mother's illness," Marian Burdick said, in passing. "We've all been trying to help her off."

Barbara did not turn her head, nor did she wave good-by. She hastened toward a waiting taxi, entered it, and the door banged.

It was the last the sorority house ever saw of her.



## CHAPTER XVII

### A PARTY AND AUF WIEDERSEHEN

COMING home one April afternoon, Caroline found the halls and living room deserted. The second floor had the same lonesome appearance.

“What has happened?” she wondered, as she climbed the stairs to her own floor. Outside the flatiron room she paused. There was a gentle babble going on within. She opened the door softly. The room was full of girls: girls in their best frocks. They overflowed the couch, the chairs, the window seat. Some were on the floor, leaning against the wall with arms entwined, college fashion.

The room had a festive air. Roses decked the table: exquisite, long stemmed-roses; Caroline afterward found there were just nineteen in the vase. Over in the corner Betty’s samovar was sputtering and fuming. Her finest china kept it company. Hannah Rosser in her Sunday best sat behind the urn, ready to dispense hospitality.

“Well!” Caroline said, edging into the room and disappearing behind the screen long enough to deposit her books, “a party?”

Instantly she was besieged with pats and kisses.



One, two, three, four, some one began to count. Then she remembered. For the first time in her life she had forgotten her birthday. The girls were honoring her. The gracious compliment, following so closely upon the heartbreaking events of the past few weeks, quite upset her.

"But how did you know that it was my birthday?" she asked, when she could speak.

Shu de Li led her over to the table. Behind the sputtering urn reposed a cake aglow with pink candles. Maumy's cake. Caroline instantly recognized it. Ever since she was old enough to remember, that sprawling, uncertain "C" had decorated the frosting.

"Those adorable sisters of yours," Shu de Li explained, "sent your box to Estelle and Nell. They were afraid you might open it before the fourteenth."

But Caroline knew better. She knew that Leigh wanted the girls to have a personal share in it. That was Leigh: always planning and dividing.

The party broke into little groups. Caroline was toasted with songs and compliments.

"May you have many birthdays and spend the next three here with us," some one cried, and another:

"Here's to the only girl on the campus with 'well-bred dash'; that's what I heard a man say the other day, Caroline."

"Dash is right, Susan; he must have seen me doing a Marathon for my eight-thirty!"



Caroline cut the cake; somebody produced ice cream and candy. The clatter rose. It was with difficulty that Hannah, rapping on the table, made herself heard.

She held a book toward Caroline.

"Just a remembrance, my dear," she said. "Long years hence, when some of us are old gray-haired spinsters, fudging about our ages, you will only have to look here to humble us."

"A birthday book — and with all your names! Oh, how I shall treasure it," Caroline exclaimed, and Hannah bent to kiss her flushed cheek.

Some one suggested dancing. The rugs were removed. Betty went to the piano. For an hour the flatiron room rang with music and laughter. In looking back across the years Caroline remembered the occasion as one of the very happiest in her life.

But April brought other things besides parties. It brought final examinations, for if California opened her doors early, she also provided an early vacation. There was the usual sleepless week, the strong coffee, the ruffled dispositions. There were term papers and seminars; hours filled with suspense and longing.

Caroline emerged fairly well satisfied. Several days before college closed, she ran in upon Margaret for a visit. She dreaded going, for she knew that she and Margaret would never again visit in the pleasant room with its west windows and wide view of sea.

A pleasant surprise awaited her. Margaret



was not alone. In one of the most comfortable chairs sat a sunny-faced, middle-aged woman.

"This is my mother, Caroline," Margaret said with pride and pleasure. "I am so glad you ran in."

Mrs. Mackintosh rose hastily, with hands extended. "I know all about you, my dear," she said, and kissed Caroline's glowing cheek.

"Of course you have come to see Margaret graduate?"

"Yes — I could scarcely forego that pleasure."

Caroline could see at a glance whence Margaret's poise came. Though totally unlike her mother in form and features, she had the same gentle breeding, the same hint of aristocratic ancestry.

Caroline's glance passed from one to the other. Mrs. Mackintosh was handsomer than her daughter, more vivacious. Her hair, black as midnight, was parted in the middle. It swept her ears in a shining plume. Her merry eyes were blue and tender, her long black lashes as irresistible as a girl's.

"I suppose you are wondering just where I acquired my Margaret," she said with impulsiveness that had been omitted from her daughter's nature. "I will tell you. Margaret's a Mackintosh — her mother's a Gillouly. The Irish that should have run in her veins was drained by the Scotch. She's her blessed father over again."

She was an ideal mother; comely and comfort-



able, with a warm heart and an intelligent outlook upon the world. A flash lay beneath the sunny sparkle of her eyes, a gentle dignity.

There was a pleasant half-hour's chat, and Caroline rose to go. As she put her hand in Margaret's, she said:

"It isn't good-by; it's just *Auf Wiedersehen*. I don't know why, but I have a feeling that I shall see you next year — one of old Maumy's hunches. We won't be together in this comfy room — but I shall see you often, just the same."

"Not unless I get a school in this locality," Margaret replied. "I fear that my college days are over for some time."

Outside "The Tubs" Caroline met Biddy. She had not seen him so often since the Sunday night tea at the sorority house, though they continued to dance together at formal and informal dances; to stop occasionally at the Varsity shop for an ice-cream soda,— a college custom.

"I saw you going in and waited for you," Biddy said quite frankly. "I want to know when you are leaving; and if Emma and I can see you to your train."

"That would be very kind. I go to-morrow — in the morning. Will you sacrifice your usual holiday nap? The train leaves rather early."

"I would sacrifice a good deal for you, Caroline — more, perhaps, than you would be willing to accept."

Caroline rather hastily changed the subject. It was not the first time that she had held him off,



diverted the conversation. She had striven to keep their friendship sane and comradey. She did not believe in "college cases", silly courtships. She had not selected a coeducational institution as an aid to marriage.

With her usual tact she steered the conversation to the impersonal. By the time they had reached the sorority house they were back on old, companionable grounds. He had told her of his summer plans — a trip into the wilderness with Emma — and she had graphically sketched her anticipated pleasures in the mountains.

"It is just possible I may see you in July," he said in parting. "I may decide to run through Colorado from the Grand Cañon."

She added a cordial invitation and he went away smiling.

Saying good-by to the girls was rather more difficult, especially to her roommates whom she had come to love very dearly.

The flatiron room had a lonesome look; trunks and packing cases had been dumped uncereemoniously, walls were dismantled. Betty sat in a dejected heap in one of the comfortable overstuffed chairs. It seemed to envelope her. She had been crying. Caroline squeezed in beside her.

"Don't be unhappy, honey," she begged, and drew the fluttering little form closer.

Betty's shoulders heaved with sobs. Caroline patted them sympathetically. "What's the matter?" she asked.



"It's seeing you all leave for home," Betty managed to say after a while. "It always puts me in the depths. You can't quite understand, perhaps, what it means to be homeless — to spend your vacations in a lonely resort with an aunt four times your own age: an aunt who doesn't care as much about you, really, as she does about her pet poodle."

Caroline was silent for a moment; she thought quickly. There was the guest room at home, big, comfortable — and empty. There were also vacant places at the table, — lonely, gaping places, for all Alison and Hope had been away for so long. There was Leigh — Leigh with her tender, mother arms always ready to throw about the unfortunate. Leigh would welcome Betty as no one else could.

And there was the Major, interested in everybody's problems; Major would love cheering a forlorn little guest; Caroline could just see Betty's hand squeezed in his, his kind eyes welcoming her.

"Betty," she said suddenly, "turn round here; look at me. How would you like to go home with me and spend the summer?"

Betty's eyes widened with surprise, her sobs ceased.

"Oh, my dear," she said, and sat up straighter. "You are so kind to ask me, but I couldn't — not without your family's invitation."

"I will vouch for my family," Caroline said without hesitation. "Southern people never



mind guests. Hospitality is a part of their creed. At home, in Virginia, people used to come and go in a procession. But there's one thing: if you come you will have to be one of us. We're not wealthy, as you are. We keep but one or two old servants in a good big house. There's work for everybody. You might have to help dust, and wipe dishes, and clean the refrigerator — well, maybe not that, for Maumy's terribly fussy about it, but you would have to make beds and attend to your own room."

"As if I would mind! Caroline, you don't know what you are proposing! Don't ask me if you don't mean it. To be in a home — a real home! I can't imagine anything so thrilling. To just be allowed to do dishes and dust —"

"It gets tiresome — and it spoils your hands! Maybe we'd do the dishes and let you play for us. We all adore music, and not one of us plays. It's been a terrible disappointment to mother. She put us all through five-finger exercises religiously, but 'nothing doing'!"

"But I really couldn't go without their invitation — your family's, could I?" Betty asked wistfully.

"They couldn't very well say no, if I wired them. That would be rude. No, you come along and take a chance. I'll telegraph that I am bringing you, so your room can be put in order. That will be necessary."

A busy afternoon followed. Betty's trunks were crammed and strapped, the room stripped



of all its contents and cleaned. Suit cases lined the walls. Here and there empty drawers yawned dejectedly.

There was a scramble the next morning to make the train; hasty good-bys, good wishes and a few tears, for college days — and college separations — are made up of laughter and tears.

Caroline could not refrain from contrasting that morning at the station with her arrival nearly a year before. She remembered the pangs of loneliness, the bewilderment, the utter desolation that had consumed her that gray autumn afternoon, and rejoiced in the friends that had gathered to speed her on her way. For Billy Boland and Sally had preceded her; they were waiting in the station with fruit and flowers. Margaret arrived a moment later with a neatly tied package; three or four of the sorority girls (Susan Stirling among them) had taken a circuitous route and stormed the party with gifts of flowers.

But it was Biddy who put Caroline and Betty safely aboard, depositing a huge box of candy in the seat beside them, Biddy who lingered for the last good-by and asked expectantly:

“Could I hope for a letter now and then, Caroline; one of those manuscripts such as I’ve seen you mailing home occasionally?”

Caroline, blushing warmly, answered:

“If you are coming over in July — there won’t be much need of — manuscripts. Besides, I



couldn't track you in a wilderness. A messenger couldn't see you for Emma's dust!"

And Biddy departed with a smile that lingered in Caroline's memory during the entire journey.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### HOME

CAROLINE'S telegram announcing the arrival of a guest caused scarcely a ripple of surprise in her family. It meant a little more baking for Maumy, putting the guest chamber to rights, and rather pleasurable anticipation. The house had been silent for so long that the sound of young voices through the halls and chambers was a welcome prospect.

"I do hope it isn't the 'bug and beetle' girl," Mayre said, as she helped Leigh hang fresh curtains in the guest room. "I think I should be a little afraid of her."

"Perhaps it is Shu de Li," Leigh suggested; "I rather hope so. I know we should like her from Caroline's descriptions. You remember she said once that she looked like that old miniature mother has of Aunt Jane Summerville, taken when she was eighteen. I've always loved that, with her honey-colored hair smoothed over her ears and her large blue eyes open in perpetual wonder. It was Shu de Li's eyes, Caroline said, and the hair, that reminded her of Aunt Jane."



“And her quaint clothes,” Mayre added. “You know she said she rather ran to soft silks and taffetas; distinctive, original things.”

“Perhaps she affects a certain type — girls so often do,” Leigh answered, shaking up the pillows on the couch. “Shall we put anemones in this gray vase, or bluebells, dear — you always know so much better than I about combinations.”

Mayre considered with half-closed eyes.

“Anemones, I think, but I will run downstairs for the low blue bowl. How nice everything looks!”

The room was attractive. Feminine touches gave a daintiness, softened the austerity of the high four-poster bed that generations of dead-and-gone Kirtleys had occupied, and produced a homey aspect that could not fail to be welcoming.

Leigh smoothed the pillows under embroidered shams, moved a reading lamp closer, deftly straightened the fresh tidies on the stuffed chairs (Mrs. Kirtley had never given up tidies though styles had changed) and lowered the blinds to a proper angle.

“Now, if it just doesn’t storm, or the wind blow,” she said, stopping in the doorway for a last look. “And I do hope that, whoever she is, she will be happy with us and enjoy her stay. I always feel that if one leaves a loving wish in a room, it reaches the guest. I don’t just know how. Perhaps it’s the comfort that speaks, the way things are arranged.”

And fifty miles away, Caroline, almost counting



the revolutions of the wheels that were so swiftly bearing her homeward, could scarcely contain her joy.

As her beloved mountains came in sight, she threw an affectionate arm around Betty's shoulder. "You must watch," she said, and there was a little catch in her voice. "You are going to see him in a minute — the Peak!"

With the first glimpse of his noble head raised among the clouds, the catch turned to a half-sob. In silence they watched the panorama unfold. Against a sapphire sky the rugged outline grew, softened with fleecy clouds and blue-gray shadows. Presently Cheyenne's rugged shoulder came in view. The Peak stood out bolder. The shadows deepened. A feeling of possession came over Caroline. That range, with its towering peaks, its wavering outline flung against the sky, was hers! A part of her very being.

It was an affectionate welcome that awaited Caroline at the station. She had scarcely disentangled herself from the Major's arms when she brought Betty into the group; Betty had hovered outside, envying the recipient of those rapturous kisses, envying the happy exclamations of a reunited family.

"So this is Betty," Leigh said, and shyly kissed her.

But it was the Major's chivalry as he bent over her hand that sent a warm thrill to her heart. He was so dignified — yet so cordial.

Mrs. Ravenel was awaiting her daughter's



home-coming on the steps of the veranda. Her arms opened and Caroline rushed into them. Leigh followed with Betty. "May I present you to our mother," she said with old-fashioned courtesy and respect. "Mother, this is Betty Carew of whom Caroline has so often written."

Mrs. Ravenel smiled as she put forth a cordial hand. Betty had no further doubts about her welcome.

After nearly a year's absence, Caroline was again a gay, care-free child. She wandered from one room to another, dragging Betty after her. There were few changes. One would scarcely expect changes in Mrs. Ravenel's home. The stately furniture was still placed as nearly as possible in positions of former grandeur. The sofa remained before the wide fireplace; the heavy mahogany card tables with books and photographs at either end, the reading lamps at a comfortable angle. Paintings still hung in tarnished frames.

But there were changes in the neighborhood. Caroline noted them immediately.

"The Ludlow house looks so different," she said, glancing through the window. "Has it been painted, or something?"

"The Ludlows aren't there any more," Mayre said, as if dreading to break unpleasant news. "They have built a smaller house out at Broadmore and moved into it. They wanted more ground, I think; and now that Jimmy is away so much —"

She hesitated, as if choosing an explanation.



Later, in the privacy of her little studio, she finished:

“It is reported that Mr. Ludlow lost a great deal of money in stocks. I don’t know how true it is, but of course we all know that people do, here. There was Mr. Sutton who went to bed a plumber, and woke up a millionaire — and those Draytons, who lost everything they owned in Cripple Creek. It’s an old story.”

“Strange Jimmy didn’t mention moving,” Caroline said, “but his letters haven’t been regular. I think he got tired of my college patter.”

During the late afternoon visitors dropped in: Kathleen, Muriel Roach, and one or two of the boys: Ned Adams and Scotty Randolph, old friends of Caroline. Out on the shady veranda Maumy served tea, her black face radiating her joy at “Li’l’ Mis’s” return.

They had almost finished when a car stopped at the curb. Mrs. Ludlow alighted, followed by Jimmy.

“I think you are all too dear, to come right away,” Caroline whispered, as she kissed Mrs. Ludlow. “I couldn’t bear it when Mayre told me that you had moved. I resent people living over there — in your home —”

“But you must see the new bungalow,” Mrs. Ludlow said happily.

Jimmy’s eyes flashed a welcome and he held Caroline’s hand a trifle longer than courtesy demanded. As usual he was immaculate and commanding, with an atmosphere of the business



world about him. Caroline watched his alert step as he crossed the porch to shake hands with her mother and acknowledge the introduction to Betty.

She smiled at the thought that flashed through her mind: Jimmy's feet were executive, they had an expression of determination.

She was laughing as he came back to her.

"Why these chuckles?" he asked.

"Can't one laugh — just at being home? It's wonderful!"

"You have grown."

"So says my family."

"And you are older —"

"A year — nearly."

"I don't mean in years — experience."

"Possibly."

They found a seat at the end of the veranda. His glance still swept her face.

"Glad to be back?"

"I'm so happy I can't talk; I've been getting things all mixed up. And everybody looks so well, Major and mother — the girls."

"Yes — and you —"

"I couldn't be better!"

He was still studying her, wondering about the change. What was it? She was just as colorful, there was the same verve. He knew presently. She had gained poise. And there were little airs and graces quite foreign to the old Caroline — not affectations, he could not have borne that, but sudden gestures, discrimination in



the use of words, a shrug of the slender, still boyish shoulders.

He resented the acquired mannerisms; Caroline had gone away as clear-cut and distinctive, as individual as the old mountain they sat facing.

"What is it?" she asked after a moment. "Have I changed so — very much?"

"You are different. You are more — composite."

"Naturally. When one lives in a house with twenty-seven girls, one imitates unconsciously."

"I dare say."

There was a move along the veranda. Kathleen passed them.

"Don't get up," she said. "I just ran in to say hello. Wonderful to have you home again, Caroline. Good-by, everybody!"

Visitors soon began to take leave. Mrs. Ludlow ran a motherly finger down Jimmy's collar as she came by. Jimmy roused, stretched his long limbs and took Caroline's hand again.

"Good-by," he said. "May I run in once in a while — as before?"

She nodded. "Please do. You must all help me to give Betty a good time. She's shipping her car over — 'The Gray Peril' we called it at the sorority house. We're going to have picnics no end. You'll come?"

At the curb he turned and waved the hand that held his gloves. Caroline felt a glow within her heart. He was the old, blithe Jimmy, for all his business cares.



The days, filled to the brim with happiness and pleasure, began to slip by at an alarming pace. May vanished at a bound and June slipped in unknowingly, June with its long blue and gold afternoons.

Betty fitted into the family life as satisfactorily as if she had been born and bred a Virginian. She was extremely lovable, very helpful.

"I caint believe that thar little gal she done come from up Norf" (any place outside the south was "Norf"), Maumy confided to Jennie Pearl, the young assistant who peeled her vegetables and ran errands. "She's got all the year-marks of the South; gen'rous, an' kind an' perlite — yes'm, perlite!"

Maumy's opinion was well grounded. Many a silver dollar from Betty's generous purse found its way into her black palm; many a quarter and dime.

"Please just take it and say nothing," Betty begged, when Maumy protested. "I know that a guest makes more work in the kitchen."

There were other ways in which Betty helped. "The Gray Peril" was often at the doctor's disposal for a quick call.

"Do, please, let me drive you," she would beg anxiously. "The 'Peril's' all ready; I got gas this morning." Sometimes, too, Mrs. Ravenel was inveigled into a spin across the mesa before dinner, or Leigh was carried to her poor charges on the south side of town.

Betty was discriminating. Mrs. Ravenel ap-



preciated that. She never intruded, never took liberties. She spent hours by herself, so that the family life might not be infringed upon. She came home laden with little gifts: flowers for the table; candy for Mayre, who had a sweet tooth; books and magazines for the Major and Leigh. She was irresistibly pretty, with her brown hair and clear gray eyes: petite and dainty.

Betty loved the long summer evenings. She loved seeing the family gather in the living room when it grew cool on the veranda: summer nights in Colorado carry a chill. Her favorite place was near Leigh, squeezed in beside her, if possible, in one of the worn brocade chairs, her hand in Leigh's slender white one,—a hand that now boasted a brilliant solitaire, Blair's token of love.

She loved to watch Mrs. Ravenel's placid face as she read in her sweet Southern way, watch the jewels on her hands as they flashed in the glow of the lazy fire.

Sometimes the lights were turned out and she played for them on the rosewood piano: "Love's Old Sweet Song" and "Believe Me if all Those Endearing Young Charms" or "Oft in the Stilly Night"—favorites of Mrs. Ravenel's—weaving in variations.

Often after she had bade the family good night, she would go up to her cosy room and cry herself to sleep with the sweetness of it. Leigh, one night, carrying her a belated letter, found her lost in the depths of the big bed, sobbing violently.



“Why, what has happened, darling?” she said, bending tenderly over the shaking form.

“Nothing, nothing at all,” Betty managed to gasp between sobs — “nothing except that — I — am — so happy.”

And one night in the quiet of Leigh’s room after the others slept, Betty told the story of her tragic life; how her mother and father had died in an accident when she was eight years old. How she had been watched over and directed by a grouchy, but honest and devoted friend of her father’s: a bachelor who knew nothing about the heartaches of a lonely child. At eighteen — a year before — she had come into her inheritance, though the guardian still looked after her interests. Her only relative was an aged aunt, a spinster who lived in large hotels and carried a pet dog about with her.

Leigh’s heart was touched. “But that’s all past now, you know,” she said affectionately, “for you have a home — here with us. We’re going to adopt you!”

Sometimes during those June evenings, Jimmy Ludlow dropped in. If Betty were playing, which was often the case, he slipped quietly into the big chair near the piano and smoked silently. Betty always played better for his presence and attention; she knew not why. Occasionally she would glance at his handsome profile, turned toward the hearth — and look away quickly. His eyes always rested upon Caroline, sitting Japanese fashion on the hearthrug, gazing into the fire.



Jimmy also dropped in once and a while in the late afternoon. If he were fortunate enough to find Caroline alone, they chatted together on the veranda, or he took her for a spin in his car.

A few weeks with her family had rubbed off sorority edges, the mannerisms that had at first worried him. She was herself again; straightforward, unaffected, a perfect companion. Often he forgot that she was a girl, she was so free from feminine artifices.

The conversation was more or less general. Once, and only once, in talking with her, did he mention his father's reverses, and then with an attitude Caroline thoroughly understood and commended. He was not downcast by adversity.

"Father's been a little unfortunate in his investments, you know," he said frankly. "Went a little too steep in 'Pharmacist', but he'll pull out again. I think he rather likes beginning again at fifty; there's a lure about it. We're enjoying the cottage down at Broadmore; less trouble for mother. Have you seen her garden? Mayre helped her lay it out. Great! I must bring you some of her yellow roses."

That was all—a bare mention. Misfortune met with a smile, a challenge.

Sometimes he talked of his own business. The law was slow, but it was sure and interesting. He rather liked having a hand in people's difficulties; it was great when things came his way—tangles straightened.

There were other pleasures. One was to drive



up into the mountains, stopping at the head of a beautiful cañon for tea in a quaint log cabin, presided over by two college girls. Those were cosy visits. Sometimes, if it were cold, as it often was so high up, they drew a table near the fireplace and reveled in the warmth and glow of the blazing logs; if warm, they basked in the sunlight of a wide window.

Sometimes they were late in arriving home. There were woodsy paths to explore; flowers to gather; brooks to dabble in—chipmunks and squirrels to watch. It was then that he put aside conventions and called her “Gypsy”, a name that sent a wave of color flying to her dusky cheeks.

Once on the way home they stopped to see his mother. It was rather disconcerting to find Mrs. Ludlow in the kitchen directing a young, inexperienced maid in the art of cooking.

“It’s such fun,” she said, untying a spotless gingham apron and hanging it on a hook behind the door. “Just like beginning housekeeping over again. It makes me young.”

“Jimmy insisted upon bringing me out here,” Caroline apologized.

“Jimmy’s just learning what a nice place a kitchen is,” his mother said, glancing proudly at the white enameled woodwork and the geraniums blooming on the window sill.

But it was the scurrying home in the early twilight that Caroline loved best. The clear stretch of country, the little homes with their flourishing gardens. Wild roses peeping through hedges.



The village streets; children playing in the road, laughing and calling to each other, impishly daring Jimmy's machine. The spicy odors that floated on the breeze from busy housewives' kitchens; the cottonwoods fanned of their tiny puff balls; the fragrant mint along the ditches.

Those summer evenings seared themselves into her consciousness with indelible joy. The fresh tang of the mountain air, half chilling as it blew in from the Peak, the night's tranquillity.

And the Major was sure to be waiting for them on the veranda, peering down the avenue a trifle anxiously, though he never failed to say:

"I knew, of course, that Caroline was all right with you, Jimmy, but it is growing late."

Caroline loved the flush that for a moment swept Jimmy's face, his never-failing, "Thank you, Major, I appreciate your confidence. The cañon was beautiful this afternoon. We have some rare columbines for you."

Thus June gave place to July with her sultry afternoons and cool, starlit nights.



## CHAPTER XIX

### CAROLINE MEETS AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE

**J**IMMY LUDLOW, driving up one midsummer afternoon, found his place at the Ravenel curb taken by a flaming red car. He looked at it in surprise. Its wheels were clogged with dirt, its crimson sides begrimed and dusty. It had evidently seen service on a long hard road.

Maumy's face was rather clouded as she admitted him. "Mis' Caroline, she done got company from Californy," she said, making sure that the door into the drawing-room was closed. "Hit's a young gen'man."

Jimmy started to back out, fumbling for a moment with his cardcase.

"Just tell Miss Caroline that I called, please, Rachel, will you?"

"Ain't y'gwine come long in? I knows Miss Caroline wants to see y'all."

Caroline must have heard voices, for she appeared at the door and added her invitation to Maumy's.

"Of course you are coming in," she insisted; "I want you to meet Biddy Webster. He's returning from the Grand Cañon — wonderful trip. He's just been telling me about it."



A moment later Biddy was striding across the room to shake hands cordially.

"I've heard of you," Jimmy said, with his ingratiating smile. "Your car looks as if you had found the roads rather bad."

Biddy was enthusiastic about his trip. A pleasant half-hour followed.

And, strangely enough, simultaneously with Biddy's appearance came a telegram from Shu de Li to Caroline.

"Accepting your kind invitation and stopping off for a few days' visit on my way home," it read.

Betty insisted upon taking Shu de Li in with her. Maumy fussed a little about extra company, Leigh hurried over the house and through the pantries, but on the whole, the news was received with pleasure.

"Shu de Li's been East on a visit," Caroline explained, "and I insisted upon her stopping over if she came back this way. I know that you will all like her and enjoy her visit."

The gayest kind of a week followed. Leigh managed an afternoon tea to which all the young people were bidden; Jimmy gave a small dinner dance at the Country Club; there were luncheons, picnics and mountain excursions. Biddy, with his big car, was a welcome acquisition.

Caroline's rides into the cañons and over the mesa with Jimmy, of necessity, came to an end. She was a busy and untiring hostess, unselfish in the extreme. She felt under obligations to Biddy.



So often on the campus he had singled her out for his favors and now, under her own blue sky, she felt she must give him as much of her companionship as possible.

It became the usual thing for her to say when the young people started off for an evening's entertainment: "Take Betty with you, please, Jim; I'll go with the crowd — Emma's so generous — she carries so many."

Jimmy smilingly acquiesced, but Betty observed that, although his manner was pleasant and agreeable, he often lapsed into silences,— long dreamy silences. It took all her ingenuity to keep him interested.

The week passed in a mad rush. Shu de Li was very popular, especially with Caroline's family. The Major liked her sparkling conversation, her keen comments, her entertaining tales of foreign life. Mrs. Ravenel enjoyed her music — when Shu de Li could find a moment to play for her — and Mayre had many happy hours going over her quaint costumes and Chinese trinkets.

The household, including Maumy, mourned when she announced at the end of ten days that she really must move homeward. Her father was expecting her in San Francisco. Mayre, with a sigh, watched the two large trunks depart. Maumy shoved a crisp five-dollar bill into the depths of her pocket and shared Mayre's depression. Tears stood in Caroline's eyes.

"It has been just wonderful, my dear," Shu de Li said to Caroline at the station. "I've never



seen such hospitality. I am quite crazy about the lovely Major — your mother too. Please try to make them understand how I have loved being here, and write to me *immediately*."

Biddy took his departure the next day. The Ravenel abode resumed its normal quiet.

It was the Sunday after Shu de Li's departure that a most unusual thing happened. The family had finished dinner. Doctor Ravenel was taking his accustomed rest on the sofa; his wife sat near with her book on her lap. Betty was at the piano playing softly. The telephone rang. It was Caroline who answered. Her mother heard her answering questions in a surprised way, and went into the hall.

Caroline was protesting. "But I really couldn't come unless you tell me who you are," she said, repeating the statement several times. "Can't you tell me who is speaking? Yes, I am Caroline Ravenel — you are not mistaken."

Finally, a little annoyed, she hung up the receiver.

"Well," she remarked, as she sat down beside Betty on the piano bench, "that was the most amazing conversation I ever had over a telephone."

The family was interested.

"What was the trouble?" Leigh asked, coming in from the dining room.

Caroline ran her hand across her forehead in a dazed fashion. The Major roused from the sofa.

"Why — why — it was a girl — or a woman.



She asked if I were Caroline Ravenel. I said 'yes.' Then she said she must see me at once on important business — immediately! She said there was something that must be explained —"

"Yes, darling, go on," Mrs. Ravenel insisted when Caroline paused. She was mildly excited.

"I asked her name. She said that she couldn't give it. I insisted. She refused. She said that she was at the hotel and would wait for me there until five o'clock —"

"My child, what did you say?" Mrs. Ravenel, thoroughly alarmed, had risen from her chair.

"Why, I said that I could scarcely go to the hotel alone to see a person who would not give her name —"

"Certainly not."

"Then she said she would come out here."

"Here?" There was a chorus of voices.

"And I told her that I could not entertain her — without knowing her errand and who she was —"

"And then—"

"Then she hung up — and so did I."

The Major had listened attentively to Caroline's recital. Presently he rose and went into his office. Closing the door he took down the receiver of his private telephone.

It did not take long to trace the call. In a few minutes the hotel clerk reported that it had come from a room occupied by a young girl, whose name he gave.

Half an hour later, the Major found Caroline



and proposed a walk. She was not surprised when he turned toward the hotel.

"You are going to find this — person?" she asked.

"Yes; it may be some one who needs our help."

They did not inquire for the girl at the office, but, taking the elevator, went straight to the room. A gentle knock brought no response. The Major waited, then knocked again imperatively.

There was a light footfall across the floor. A key turned in the lock and a slender young girl of about Caroline's own age — or younger — peered through a narrow space.

"You wished to see Miss Ravenel?" the Major inquired kindly.

Under a coat of powder and rouge, the girl's face paled. She stepped back, and with a startled gesture put her hand to her throat.

"Yes," she began, and stopped. "Will you come in?"

It was a comfortable room — one of the best the house afforded. Major Ravenel looked about while the girl pushed forward chairs. A huge wardrobe trunk occupied a corner; a table was filled with books and magazines. On the bureau stood the photographs of a middle-aged man and woman, — respectable-looking people, if one could judge by photographs.

"You wished to see me about something?" Caroline began.

A flush crept under the coat of powder.



“Yes — I saw your picture in the paper this morning — you and your friends, and you looked like a girl I sort of knew once — back in Omaha — and I thought I would call you up and see if you were her —”

She hesitated. The flush died, leaving the pretty oval face white again.

“I see. But I have never been in Omaha.”

“Ain’t you really? This girl, she looked a lot like you — she had them big yellow-brown eyes —”

She stopped again and lowered her own.

It gave Caroline a chance to study her face. Her glance traveled from the ratted blonde hair that stood like a brush heap above the round blue eyes, to the gaudy pink blouse, to which a gold watch was pinned conspicuously; to the elaborate necklace wound about the low, square-cut neck of the bodice — down to the small nervous hands.

Suddenly Caroline bent closer, and gave a little gasp of surprise. On the finger of the girl’s left hand was a ring with a small cluster of pearls, — an unusual ring, one not easily forgotten.

Caroline reached over and took the hand in hers. “Will you tell me, please, where you got this ring — the pearl?”

The child — she seemed scarcely more than that — looked up wistfully.

“That’s sort of a mascot that I always wear,” she said quickly. “I’ve had it ever since I was a little girl. It was given to me. I was sick —”



Dr. Ravenel had drawn closer and was listening attentively.

“It was when my mother was alive —” She glanced toward the picture on the bureau. “That’s her over there — and my father. They’re both dead now. We had come up from the South for her health. She was awful miserable, and father had sold out everything to bring her here — to this town it was — over there somewhere.” She pointed with a jerky movement to the west.

“Yes,” Caroline breathed, “go on, please; I am so interested.”

“One day — it was just before Christmas — I took sick — awful sick. They thought I was going to die. We sent for a lot of doctors, but it was so cold and the snow was so deep they wouldn’t come. Finally one did; he brought his little girl with him. They came again Christmas, and the little girl left a package at the back door. This ring was in it — in a little velvet box. Mother brought it in to me and I put it on — and then — mother said that from that minute I began to get better. You see I had never had a ‘pretty’ before —”

“A pretty?” Caroline breathed the familiar word.

“That’s what I called it — I was just a little thing —”

“Yes, so little — I remember —”

“You remember!”

“I was — that little girl.”



For a moment they sat staring at each other. Slowly tears found their way from the blue eyes and trickled down the powdered cheeks. The Major rose suddenly and going over to the window stood looking down at the street below.

"But what happened to you after you went away?" Caroline asked. "We so often wondered."

"We went up to Cripple Creek where the big mines are. It was too high up there for mother. Her heart got bad. And then — she died —"

"I am so sorry —"

"Yes; it was too bad — for just a little while after that, father struck it rich — terrible rich! And it all came so easy to him. Jeff Taylor — that was his partner — always said that father just stubbed his toe on a rock and uncovered the Homestake."

"The Homestake!" The exclamation came from both the Major and Caroline.

"Yes — it's a wonderful mine, isn't it?"

"Marvelous." It was the Major who spoke. He had turned away from the window. "And you say that you own it?"

"Jeff and I together. You see, father he died last year. Pneumonia. You don't last very long with pneumonia up in the hills, you know." She sighed deeply.

The Major took the chair opposite her and looked into the blue eyes.

"And now will you tell me what you wanted to say to my daughter?" he asked gently.



There was only a moment's hesitation. Eunice Middleton went over to the bed. A newspaper lay open. With her finger she traced a picture of three young girls, serving afternoon tea in a garden.

Mrs. Ravenel had objected to the picture when it was taken. She disliked notoriety, disliked having unknown people gazing upon her daughter's face, but Leigh had thought it a little snobbish to refuse; besides, the community was interested in the joys of college girls home for vacation.

Eunice held up the paper.

"It was your face," she said to Caroline, "that attracted me. You looked so pretty — and kind. I noticed it this morning, first thing. I was awfully lonesome. I don't know anybody in town. I just came down from the 'Creek' last week. Jeff thought I ought to know some girls and get into society with all my money. I can have everything I want — most everything —"

"And you thought I would help you — find society?"

Eunice nodded frankly. "Yes — I thought — maybe it wasn't quite square, but I had an idea if I got acquainted with you, even if I had to make up something — a story, you know, like saying there was something that ought to be explained to you — why — why — we'd get acquainted that way. I intended to tell you about it afterward, and maybe buy you something pretty —"



“And you didn’t dream that you had ever really seen me before?”

“No — oh, no!”

Caroline glanced at the Major. He had reached over and taken Eunice’s little thin hand in his own.

“What is it you want,” he asked, “more than anything else?”

“Just friends. People think money’s such an awful lot — and it is, but there are some things it won’t buy, you know. I’ve got a pretty good education; I’ve been through high school. I’m eighteen. Jeff thinks I ought to go to boarding school now and get polished off, but I don’t know. I think I would rather stay here. It’s a pretty place, and this is a good hotel —”

“Oh, but you mustn’t stay here alone,” Caroline interrupted.

“I know how to take care of myself,” Eunice put in quickly. “A girl brought up in a mining camp does. Ain’t nobody going to get fresh with me.”

The Major and Caroline exchanged glances; rather helpless glances that, interpreted, might have read: “What shall we do with her? We must do something.”

Caroline thought but a moment.

“Would you like to come home with us for a little while — and have tea out in the garden — the one in the picture? We’re having it there this evening.”

She turned to her father.



"I wonder, Major, if you would wait for us downstairs," she said. "I want to speak with Eunice alone for a minute."

The Major's footsteps had scarcely died away in the hall when she crossed the room and put an impetuous arm around the forlorn little figure near the window.

"I am going to ask you to do something for me," she said tactfully, "since I am trying to help you. I couldn't take you home to my mother and sisters with all that make-up on your face. You see—it isn't done here—in society (she smiled at the word) not as it is in—Cripple Creek, perhaps."

Eunice was inclined to doubt the statement, but she consented to remove it, returning from the private bath clean and wholesomely attractive.

"My, how much prettier you are!" Caroline cried, genuinely pleased. She longed to get at the bushy hair with its burned and split ends; to suggest a less transparent blouse, but she refrained.

"Hadn't I better put on another dress?" Eunice suggested, her eyes bright with the prospect of a party. "I have some wonderful evening clothes—"

"We don't dress for Sunday night tea; perhaps if you have a one-piece dress—"

"I have; it's new, too."

She brought from the closet a light-weight navy blue serge, none too warm for a Colorado evening. It was simple and neat. Caroline waited



while Eunice put it on; together they joined the Major in the lobby.

It was very late that same night when Caroline, in kimono and slippers, tapped at the Major's office door.

"May I come in for just a minute?" she asked. "I can't get to sleep. I came downstairs for a sandwich and a glass of milk, and saw your light."

With his usual courtesy, the Major drew forth a chair.

"I want to say first, Major, that I think it was perfectly dear the way you introduced Eunice to mother and the girls — just saying she was a little patient you once had years ago on the West side. It was exactly what I had planned to say myself. Isn't it strange how often we think the same things? I couldn't bear to have any one — not even Leigh — know about her pitiful little subterfuge. Wasn't it touching — I couldn't keep the tears back; alone there in that barn of a room, *friendless* — with all that ghastly money. Did you ever hear such a fairy tale in your life? Talk about Aladdin's lamp!"

The Major laughed softly.

Caroline rambled on: "Could such a thing happen anywhere else in the world, Major — a fortune made over night! *Over night*. Can you grasp it?"

"I reckon it is true, honey. I suspect the old chap was right; Middleton probably did stub his toe on a piece of rich ore — and had the tenacity



and sense to hold on long enough to mine the ground."

For a moment they sat in silence. Caroline broke it:

"Wasn't it the strangest thing that she should have called me — there were other pictures in the paper — Oh, Major," she broke off, "the angels *do* keep blue prints and mark out people's destinies. I know it. Eunice needed me — and I need her."

"You need her?" The question came with surprise.

"Yes; listen. I have a plan. That's why I couldn't get to sleep. Eunice can't live at that hotel. It is absurd. Her salvation lies in education — practical education. She's ready for college —"

Although it was past midnight, the Major settled back in his chair and lighted a fresh cigar.

"Yes, honey, go on, I am listening."

"You remember my roommate, Margaret — you know how she stood by me that time — I have told you all about it — oh, Major, you can never know what an experience that was. I don't know how I ever lived through it without you — I can't speak of it yet. Well, anyway, I owe Margaret a debt I can never pay — just for her love and sympathy — her faith."

She hesitated but a moment.

"Margaret is poor. As poor as this girl is rich. She wants to take a course in law, but she hasn't the money; she can't come back to college



for several years. Now," Caroline laid a determined forefinger in the palm of a brown hand, much as a man would do in presenting a proposition, "now, why couldn't Eunice go back to college with me, take a house in Berkeley — a pretty, comfy one, and bring Margaret and her mother up there to live with her — pay them something for their care and direction — a right good sum, since she can so well afford it. How much do you suppose she's worth, Major?"

The Major leaned back and smoked comfortably.

"Over a million, I fancy."

"Over a million, Major? That's positively — *indecent!*"

"Almost, honey — for one lone young person."

"What's she going to do with it?"

"Spend it, I suppose."

"Oh, Major, what a power she could be — if she were trained."

"Yes."

"And Mrs. Mackintosh is so wise, such a wonderful woman. I wish you could see what she has done for Margaret — and with almost nothing. She'd mother Eunice. I can just see the poor little thing in those kind arms. Besides, she is a lady; she is a gentlewoman. And Margaret could teach Eunice — repression — as she tried to teach me. Margaret's a little cold — and calculating, but Scotchly honest, if you can put it that way."

The Major did not speak for a while.

"It is a very pretty dream," he admitted later.



“And you may be able to manage it — if it is in the blue prints!” He smiled into the warm enthusiastic eyes; a tender, adoring smile that found reflection in the topaz ones opposite.

“Anyway, I am going to try the scheme out, Major. To-morrow I will take the ‘Peril’ while Betty’s practising, and pick up this rich young Miss and talk with her. She owes me something herself — I once sacrificed the prettiest thing I owned for her. I can remember yet how I sopped my pillow weeping over the little pearl ring she still wears. Perhaps — who knows, it is a mascot.”

The Major rose, left a kiss on Caroline’s hot cheek, turned out the light, and gently pushed her into the darkness.

“It is time we were both in bed,” he said, and waited while she climbed the stairs ahead of him.



## CHAPTER XX

### LEIGH GIVES THE FAMILY A SURPRISE

VACATION days were waning, much to Betty's and Caroline's regret. It was difficult to give one's attention to studies in midsummer, especially when university students from all over the country were beginning to arrive home,—free to play until early October.

“But we were out of college so much earlier,” Caroline defended, when Betty complained. “It is just as broad as it is long, you know. Of course, I realize —”

She stopped and her trilling laugh bubbled.

“You realize what?”

“That it is rather hard, when Yale opens so late, and you might have two perfectly good months here with Stan and the ‘Peril.’ I’m sorry, dear.”

A pink flush made its way up Betty's round cheek. Stanley Warren, one of the boys long known to the Ravenels, had been very attentive during his short sojourn at home. Betty had met him at Jimmy's dinner dance. There had been several excursions into the cañons; several cozy dinners at the Country Club; there was an



especial corner on the Ravenel veranda that Betty claimed in the summer twilight.

"Things do move fast when they get a 'gwine', as Maumy says," Caroline teased. "Of course I will be maid of honor. I hope that I won't get to staring at the memorial window and forget my duties. That happened at my sister's wedding."

"You will be maid of honor all right, Caroline."

"Soon?"

The flush traveled.

"Well — not immediately, my dear. You see I have two years more of college and Stan one. Then it takes — how many years does it take to go through Johns Hopkins, do you know?"

They were taking an afternoon stroll. Caroline stopped in her tracks.

"Betty," she cried, "what do you mean?"

"I guess I mean, Cal dear, that things 'do move fast' sometimes, as old Maumy says. I've only known Stan three weeks — but I like him better than any man I've ever met before — and I have met a lot — and he seems to like me. That's all there is to it —"

Caroline stared for a moment in astonishment, then she turned.

"Betty Carew, you come right straight back to Major," she said. "Come along! Don't you ever think that I am going to be responsible for a thing like this without some backing. How would I ever face Hannah Rosser?"

The Major was alone. Caroline pushed Betty into a chair facing him and sat down on the arm.



"Major," she began, while Betty tried to stop her, "Major!"

It was as far as she could get. Betty giggled; the flush grew deeper.

"Major — I don't know how to begin — I really don't. I haven't breath enough. Betty here — has got herself engaged to Stan Warren. Imagine! and she's only known him three weeks — and heavens! *we* are responsible — or Jimmy is, he introduced them. It isn't that I don't think Stan is adorable; I've always been quite crazy about him myself, and I know how terribly good-looking he is, and what a nice family he comes from, but —"

She stopped very much out of breath and looked down in Betty's amused eyes.

"See," Caroline went on, "Major is aghast, too — he can't even speak."

"Then, perhaps I had better," Betty said complacently. She was the least embarrassed of the three.

"It is like this, Doctor Ravenel. I've always said that when I met a man who measured up to my ideals, morally and physically, I would try to make him like me. You see," she hesitated for a second, "I am situated rather differently from Caroline. I have no home. I have always longed for one; more than anything else in the world. Fortunately, I don't have to worry about money matters. I shouldn't have to wait for a man to get a start. I should only want to know that he was clean and fine and ambitious, as Stan is —"



you must admit that — to marry and settle down. Oh, Doctor Ravenel, I don't think you, or Caroline, or any one else, unless they have had my experience, can realize how lonely I am. No sisters or brothers; no cousins even. I want some one that's my very own. I want my own kiddies and my own fireside and my own man. I have had a good deal of attention. I know boys. My inheritance (she seldom spoke of her fortune) has often made me popular where my real merits — if I have any — counted for absolutely nothing. But Stan's different. I don't believe he knows that I have a penny; not unless Caroline has told him, and she wouldn't. He likes me for myself; he likes my music; my books; my friends. We know how to laugh together; to be sorry at the same time. We enjoy the same things. I know we can't help being happy —”

She broke off suddenly.

“I had intended to tell Caroline about it very soon. It has all been so sudden that — that I am not quite used to the idea myself yet. But we do want to be engaged — Stan and I. He's going to speak with his father and mother, and then he's coming to you; if I may ask such a privilege. I want your advice. I really do; yours and Mrs. Ravenel's. My guardian won't care a rap whom I marry — if a clean passport can be given. You know what I mean. He must have good standing. That is all.”

Doctor Ravenel did not speak for a moment. To him there was something infinitely pathetic in



the confidence of youth. It expected so much. Life, at nineteen, was all promise, romance; the future an untried paradise.

“I shall be very glad to talk with Stanley,” he said after a moment, “and to help you in this matter all I can. I realize, by contrast, if in no other way (Betty knew that he was alluding to his own happy family life) how deprived you have been and, if it so happens that your feeling for this young man grows, and his for you, during the next few years, I see no reason why you should not marry. I hope only that you will not be hasty.”

But Caroline was far from satisfied. She knew Betty; knew that, while she had settled remarkably during the past year, she was still susceptible and impulsive. Nell and Estelle had watched her for so long, had accomplished such wonders with her, that she rather feared their judgment of so hasty a courtship.

As for Stanley, she was quite sincere in saying that she liked him. He was a fine type of young manhood; tall, slender and dark, an excellent background for Betty's fair loveliness. His father, Doctor Warren, was a reputable physician and an honored citizen. He was a very good friend of her father's. Often they consulted together. It was Doctor Warren's dream to have his son become a physician and follow in his footsteps.

And there were other matrimonial tangles. Caroline went into Leigh's room one night and



found her sitting by the window in the starlight, staring absently at a letter.

"What is it, Leigh?" she asked, drawing up a footstool and laying an affectionate arm on her lap.

"Nothing, darling —"

"But there is. I know there is. Tell me. Is that a letter from Blair?" Blair had been East all summer settling up his father's estate.

"Yes, dear."

"When is he coming home?"

"Next week."

"Really? How lovely. I shall see him before I leave for college."

"But he isn't going to stay, Caroline."

"What's the matter?"

"His father's death will necessitate his living East now. You see he must go on with the business. It's a sort of brokerage—it must be handled in New York."

"I see. And he wants to take you with him?"

"Yes, but I can't, you see —"

"Why can't you?"

"Leave you all here — Mother and Father!"

"Leigh, do you really care for Blair?"

"Why, of course —"

"Then how can you put *anybody* before him — any of us. He needs you, has needed you for a long time. We don't — oh, Leigh dear, I didn't mean that, please forgive me. We always need you, of course, but you see we are grown now. You have mothered us all until we ought to be



able to fight our battles alone. I really think dear, you aren't fair to Blair. He's been so patient with you; with all of us in our selfishness."

"Don't speak that way, darling."

"But we have been, oh, so selfish! It is time for us to help you — and him. What does he say, Leigh; tell me, please?"

Leigh held out the letter and turned her head that Caroline might not see the tears in her eyes. Caroline turned on the light and read:

"I have made up my mind, Leigh, that if you will not come back with me, my love cannot satisfy you. I am coming West with a prayer in my heart. It is that I may bring you back to this old home which was once my father's. It is more than comfortable; it is attractive, with its suburban views and gardens. But I have so often told you about it. I can see you moving about the place, putting it to rights, turning it into a home again. Surely you cannot, will not disappoint me."

Caroline put the letter back in Leigh's hand.

"Surely you *cannot* — *will not*, Sister. It would be too cruel after these years of patient waiting."

"But Father, dear —"

"Major will manage."

"And Mother."

"Mother wants you to be happy. She has Mayre."

Caroline went straight to the Major's office. He always smoked and read there until late into



the night. When she had put the matter before him, she added:

“I really fear, Major, the matter is up to you. Leigh will never leave us unless we make her. I know she loves Blair, but she has so long been a slave to duty, to our needs and happiness —”

The Major did not let her finish.

“You are right, my child,” he said. “Absolutely. Leigh must not longer delay. She must make up her mind one way or the other. I will talk with her to-morrow.”

In less than a week preparations began for the wedding. Blair arrived, learned that the day had been set; could scarcely believe his good fortune. He took Caroline into the drawing-room and pulled her down on the old sofa beside him.

“I have you to thank for this, young lady,” he said. “You don’t know just how much I appreciate it all; confound it, I never was much of a speech maker. But if you ever need help, just remember you’re going to have a brother-in-law who would do anything in reason — or out of it — for you.”

“I know you would, Blair,” Caroline said warmly. “But it’s enough just to have you in the family, and to know how perfectly adorable you will always be to Leigh. She’s a darling —”

She had to stop there and leave the room rather hastily.

The preparations for Leigh’s wedding differed widely from Alison’s. For two years Leigh had been stocking the hope chest that stood at the



foot of her bed: a little old-fashioned one that had come down from the Kirtley's in fairly good condition. Leigh preferred it to one of the new, brass-bound cedar boxes of the prevailing mode.

Inside it was sweet and dainty. When she opened it a faint perfume of orris root escaped; a delicate fragrance that belonged to a by-gone generation. But Leigh loved old-fashioned things—even odors. Her linen smelled of verbena or lavender, as her grandmother Kirtley's always had.

The lingerie was very simple and hand-made. There were no modern silks; only the finest Japanese linens and nainsooks, embroidered and monogrammed, threaded with white ribbons; as charming and individual as Leigh herself.

There were tablecloths as fine and perfect as looms could produce—Cousin Eliza had seen to that—and napkins exquisitely hemmed. There were tea cloths and doilies, unusual in texture and design—Mayre had spent hours over them—and beautiful dresser scarves. Not in quantities; not more than Leigh herself or a trusted servant could care for.

She had been reared with a beautiful respect for household possessions. She would keep house as her mother had; in a simple, dignified way, preserving the traditions of her family.

“Leigh,” Caroline said one day, “you aren’t going to count your silver and carry it upstairs every night, are you?” She probably had in mind a vision of her mother laying knives and



forks and spoons with mathematical precision in a double-portioned basket after Maumy had brought in a basin of soapy water for the evening ablution.

“Certainly, darling, and wash it in the dining room, as we have always done. Why, Caroline, you wouldn’t let solid silver go into the kitchen, would you, child?”

“I wouldn’t have it in the first place — not if it was that much bother! Oh, Leigh dear, you should have gone to college. You need a more liberal education. Blair, you’ll have to watch her; she’ll be polishing up your shirt bosoms and embroidering your socks —”

“Let me catch her!”

“She’ll do it behind your back — that’s the trouble!”

There were no parties to wear the bride out; no long sieges with dressmakers. Miss Young came for a few days, and a few days were given over to shopping. There were no wedding invitations to address; no fret and bother about guests.

“Let us make this wedding as quiet as possible, both because of the work and expense,” Leigh begged. “We will have a few of our dearest friends — that is all, then Blair and I will slip quietly away. Please, that is much the best.”

The days were full, nevertheless. Leigh was busiest of all. One morning Caroline found her making out little slips of white paper.

“What are you doing, Leigh?” she asked.



“Just leaving some little reminders for you all. Things I have always attended to. I thought I would pin them around conspicuously, where you couldn’t fail to see them.”

Caroline took them up, one by one, and read:

“Fishing boots and rod in packing case, northwest corner of attic.”

“Plumbers, Smith and Boyle: telephone 803.”

“Insurance policies and deeds in safety deposit box at bank. Key in second right-hand drawer of office desk, labeled.”

“Bledsoe, furnace man, will be found at 211 East Huerfano Street. Engage him early.”

“Extra bedding on high shelf in guest-room closet. Furs in box below.”

Those little white slips showed what Leigh had meant to her family.

In turning over the household keys, Leigh put one into Caroline’s hand. “This is to the side door of Madame Wakefield’s house,” she said. “We promised to look in now and then. You know everything is there, just as she left it.”

A little later, Caroline took Betty over. “I want you to see an English home,” she said.

The key ground heavily in the lock, but it finally turned. The hall was dark and gloomy. In the drawing-room, dust lay thick on the ghostly furniture. Books and photographs had been locked away. Caroline was disappointed.

“Let us go upstairs and have a look at Charles Fernal’s portrait,” she said.

He was still there, looking down a bit haught-



ily, as became an English gentleman. Caroline turned back the sheet that protected the wide sofa and made a place for Betty. "Let us sit here a minute, and I will tell you about him," she suggested.

"When I was a child," she began, "that face up there always fascinated me. I suppose it was the sad story of his blighted life, and his very aristocratic and handsome countenance. He is the nephew of Madame Wakefield who lived here. He came from England with his young wife, hoping our Colorado climate would benefit her health, but it didn't — she died."

She went over his history briefly, and that of Madame Wakefield. "Some day, I am going to know Charles FEVERAL. Perhaps when I have finished my education and go to England to visit."

"You are really going?" Betty asked with interest.

"Some day, unless Madame returns here, which I think is hardly possible. In her last letter to Leigh, she spoke as if she might never again leave England. You see, she is quite old, and rheumatism bothers her a great deal. She has not been at all well of late."

The information was followed by a deep sigh.

"Sometimes I fear I may never see her again. It makes me very sad. I am so fond of her. She is such a good friend and so merry. We never seemed to feel the difference in our ages. We used often to chat for hours together. Especially



just before she went away. She told me so much of her early life in England; of her first marriage — her grief when her husband died. And of her second marriage much, much later. I think it must have been because she was so very lonely that she married Captain Wakefield. He proved an ideal companion.

“It was strange, but she told me so much of her home; of the house, the grounds; her pensioners: what she wanted to do for them, I grew so familiar with it all that I felt I could go to England and pick out ‘The Towers’ — it’s a country home, you know — without ever being directed.”

“I thought English people were always so reticent,” Betty remarked with interest.

“Yes; I believe they are. But don’t imagine Madame Wakefield was garrulous. Somehow we seemed drawn to each other. If she hadn’t been English, one would almost have thought her a Southerner. She had so many of their traits. Her accent was the most beautiful I ever listened to — England and Virginia sublimated; if you know what I mean. I can’t just express it.”

It was with regret that Caroline, half an hour later, turned the key again in the grating lock. The lonely house, cold and barren as it was, still held treasured memories.



## CHAPTER XXI

### A WEDDING

**L** EIGH'S wedding, which occurred on the last day of July, was in keeping with the simplicity of her life and habits.

A little before five in the afternoon the family and a few friends gathered in Grace Church. Caroline and Betty had made several pilgrimages to near-by cañons for Leigh's favorite flowers and greens, and Mayre had spent the morning adorning the chancel.

Never had the church appeared more tranquil, more beautiful. Leigh's gentle spirit seemed to hover over it, making it indeed a place of worship. There was no pomp, no splendor to detract from the sanctity. When the clergyman met Leigh and Blair at the altar and said, "Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God to join this man and woman in holy matrimony," the hush along the old pews deepened; the organ dropped to a sweeter cadence; a prayer rose from every heart.

Caroline, her hand resting in her mother's, scarcely breathed. She wondered how Mayre could mar the scene by raising her handkerchief to her eyes. It was all so perfect, so profound,



so mysterious; the joining together of two souls for all eternity. She knew that was what it meant to Leigh; not a temporal union, not for a short earthly span—but *forever*. She could scarcely comprehend it herself, yet her vision widened. She seemed to be touching the outer realm of a heavenly promise, something dim and remote, yet satisfying.

At the house a merry feast followed. Maumy, serving the guests in a snowy cap and apron, was proud and important; Mrs. Ravenel handsome and serene.

Caroline saw the Major's eyes cloud as he looked at Leigh across the table and her own filled with tears, then, ashamed to evidence the least unhappiness on her sister's wedding day, she blinked them back with admirable self-control.

It was only when Leigh came downstairs, pretty and trim in her dark traveling suit, that she really had to struggle to keep back the tears. To think of Leigh going out of the old home—forever—was almost more than she could bear.

They all gathered on the veranda for the last farewells. Leigh kissed each one, coming back to her mother for a second lingering caress. There was a wave; Blair's handshake and new, big-brother kiss, the bang of the taxi door, and they were gone. Caroline, unable longer to hide her emotion, fled to the tower room.

The days following were almost busier than the preceding ones. It was amazing how many peo-



ple had sent Leigh gifts which had to be packed and shipped. There were rooms to straighten and clean.

Betty recalled Caroline's invitation to her: "You will have to work if you visit us; we all do."

She was quite willing. She went about the house with a dustcloth in her hands, a smile on her lips. She was very happy. The Doctor's talk with Stanley had been most satisfactory. Doctor and Mrs. Warren had called upon her and sanctioned their son's choice.

Caroline was also more content. She felt that Betty was at last safely anchored; that her future was assured.

Her feeling about Eunice Middleton was less comfortable. Sometimes, in fact quite often, she wondered if she had not been very rash in making her proposition to Eunice. She found her a very uncertain quantity, undisciplined, inclined to be selfish, and extremely ordinary. Perhaps it was the very fact of her being ordinary that strengthened Caroline's interest. She knew that she could help her, hard as the refining process might be.

Eunice blew warm, and then cold, in regard to the plan.

"You see I would kind of like to go — and then again I wouldn't," she said to Caroline, digging her brilliant parasol into the sand and turning her head with birdlike coquetry. "I don't care to be bossed. You see I am eighteen and have my own money."



“Let us forget about the money for a little while, Eunice. When you have had it longer and find how many things there are more interesting and powerful, you won’t put so great a value on it. People who have had wealth for a long time never speak of it.”

“Why not?”

“Because it is rather vulgar.”

“You think I am vulgar, then?”

“I think that you are very inexperienced. That is why I should like to have you under Mrs. Mackintosh’s care for a few years. She would smooth down the rough edges.”

Eunice sulked for a minute.

“Why are you so interested in me?” she asked. There was a speculative look in the eyes raised to Caroline’s.

“I was interested in you many years ago — wasn’t I? You aren’t forgetting that?”

Eunice squirmed. “But if I didn’t have money, would you be as interested as you are now?”

The question troubled Caroline’s conscience. She wondered if she would be.

“I think that your money will bring you much greater happiness if you are taught to use it wisely, and to that extent I am truly interested in you. You are lonely; you want friends. I can help you to find them, the right kind.”

“Well, I’ll think about it. I will write to Uncle Jeff and see what he says.”

“Suppose we both run up to Cripple Creek



some morning and talk the thing over with him," Caroline said impulsively.

The suggestion materialized in a visit. Caroline liked Jeff immediately. She knew that his gruffness shielded the heart of a child, that under the rough exterior there was force and character.

"Well, now, I don't know, Sissy," he said to Eunice, "but what this ain't a pretty fair proposition. I remember your Maw telling many times of how good these people was to you the time you was stranded down at the Springs; specially this young woman's paw. He never sent you no bills. Shouldn't wonder if you hadn't oughter pay him somethin' now, a nice tidy bit —"

"Oh, please don't mention that," Caroline begged. "I am sure my father never made an account against them."

"Well, Sissy here is able to pay. I reckon they ain't any girl of her age in these parts has got her bank account."

"So I understand. It seems that she really should be trained to wisely use so much money. Don't you feel there is an obligation, when one has been so favored?"

"Yes, I do, young lady. I've said so to Sissy here, more'n onct. But I ain't go'n let her do nothin' foolish. I'm keepin' an eye on her."

"You might not always be spared to her —"

"That's jest it; that's the very thing that worries me. I'm gettin' old. Sixty and past. I ought to hold out a long time yet; I ain't changin' my ways much —" he waved a toil-roughened



hand around the log cabin. "I still work. But you never kin tell. Sissy's paw there, he went off in three days. Well as I am this minute before the pneumony struck him. Went off jest like that." He snapped his hard, cracked fingers.

"How fortunate Eunice was to have you."

"Yes, I sort a calculate that way, too. I've played fair with her, and I'd make it pretty darn hot for anybody that didn't." He gave Caroline a searching look. "You say you know this woman well, that would take her in; she's O. K.?"

"Perfectly. Of course, I don't know whether she will consider my plan; but if she consents, I assure you that Eunice would be a most fortunate girl."

Jeff scratched his bald head and frowned.

"I'll take the matter up with you later," he said, "but I'm right near persuaded it would be a good thing all round, considerin' your references."

"Thank you; then I may hear from you?"

"In a few days."

Later in the week came his letter. It was poorly written, poorly spelled, but it was kind and businesslike. It said in substance: "I think Sissy had better go back to school with you. But before you get the old lady (Caroline smiled when she thought of Mrs. Mackintosh as an old lady) down from her home, you better guarantee her something: say two year's pay for the house and her services in running it; wouldn't be fair not to.



I am sending you a check to cover what I figger it ought to be, and hope the plan will work out O. K. I liked your looks and I want you to keep behind Sissy. She's spoilt, but she's got good horse sense 'long with it. Your friend, Jeff Taylor."

The check took Caroline's breath away. It was enough to keep a girl in college for six years.

This had all happened before Leigh's wedding, so by the first of August, Caroline had Mrs. Mackintosh's letter.

"My dear child," it began. "Margaret and I have been thinking over your most surprising letter for several days and have about come to the conclusion that we cannot afford to let this opportunity go by. It would mean so much to both of us. We could be together, and Margaret could continue her studies without interruption. Regarding your generous spirit, I have not words to speak. More about that when we are again together. I hope that I may prove useful to the lonely child, and be able to direct her as I would wish my own daughter to be directed were the case reversed. Margaret and I will go down to the city at once and try to find a desirable house with attractive surroundings. Mr. Taylor has certainly been more than generous, and we ought to find something pleasant and homelike. You will hear from me very soon. With love from us both, dear Caroline, affectionately yours,

"SHEILA MACKINTOSH."



Came a mad week of shopping. Eunice haunted the stores from morning until night, increasing her wardrobe with such bizarre and unnecessary things that Caroline and Betty both mutinied.

"You never in the world could wear such clothes at college," Betty protested. "It isn't done, you know!"

"Then why not set the fashion — with all my money?"

They were in an exclusive shop, and Caroline's cheeks reddened.

"Eunice," she begged, "please, I have so often asked you not to refer to that —"

"Why not? What's money for if it ain't to buy things with. And why shouldn't I start something —"

"You will, my dear," Betty put in mildly.

"All right; then I'll take the red satin and the pink brocaded velvet and the black lace."

It was a perfect orgy of spending.

"I am afraid, Cal dear, you've a white elephant on your hands," Betty said, when they left Eunice at the hotel. "Whatever will you do with her?"

"I don't know," Caroline said helplessly. "I am relying a good deal on Mrs. Mackintosh. She's so wise. Surely she will find a way. But sometimes I wonder if I am being quite fair to her — if Margaret's education is worth it?"

There was but little time for Jimmy during that last week. One day Caroline, calling with Mrs. Ludlow, ran in upon him at his office. She had



never seen him at work before and the sight of him, bent over a stack of white papers, gave her a new thrill.

“Hello,” he said, jumping up and making a dive for the coat he had doffed, “how nice! To whom am I indebted for this honor?”

“Your mother,” Caroline admitted and his smile faded a trifle.

“Anyway, you are most welcome.”

He took them through the rooms. In one a stenographer was hard at work, in another several clients waited.

“We mustn’t stop you,” Caroline said, edging towards the door. “Come and see me. You know the end of my vacation is drawing near — I go next Friday.”

He did run out for a call the night before Caroline left for college, but the house was full of young people and he remained only a little while.

The friendship between them, sane, wholesome and normal, had grown with the summer; they both felt that it had. Something in the pressure of Jimmy’s warm handshake in parting, in his hearty, “Well, the best of luck to you,” said more than the words.

Caroline’s eyes, lifted to his in a brief farewell, held an expression that Jimmy cherished in his heart for many moons.



## CHAPTER XXII

### CARES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CAROLINE always recalled her Sophomore year in college as the most trying of the four. Life at the sorority house was still gay and interesting. Especially at the rushing season. This festivity Caroline experienced from the inside, for the first time.

She could not say that she altogether enjoyed it. It was a strenuous period, those first seven days; pleasurable in a way, but nerve-straining and wearing; quite as hard on dispositions as mid-term examinations.

To Caroline, with her vivid imagination, it was like witnessing an interesting drama, the parts being taken by Beauty, Gaiety, Expectancy, Jealousy, Pride — sometimes with Malice for the villain. There were long meetings in which girls were discussed from the standpoint of personal attraction to ability and popularity.

Often during those days she heard, "Oh, we *must* get her — she will help the house: good family, brains, standing." There was a group — Nell Neally, Hannah Rosser, Isabel Schrader, Fanchon Donaldson — older girls who tried to



keep the reins steady, but their votes were not in the majority.

Sometimes at these discussions Caroline wondered if she would have had the temerity to let her name go up for membership if she had known the methods of procedure. For, upon entering the august body, one went like Everyman into the grave, accompanied by Good-Deeds — and a great many bad ones.

But if on occasions she witnessed strife and petty jealousy, she also beheld loyalty and forbearance. She saw weak girls influenced by stronger; ideals raised, standards valued.

Sometimes she shrank back into a corner of the beautiful chapter room and watched the pageant pass. Once she roused to ask:

“But do we never ask girls for what we could do for *them*?”

It was a mild bomb. Beauty bristled; Pride retaliated with, “Oh, Caroline, you are too democratic for this age;” Jealousy flung, “We wouldn’t build up our house very fast that way — we must have representative girls.”

Hannah Rosser said, “I have often had Caroline’s feeling: that we would do well to go in the highways and select girls of worth — not of social standing —” but her argument (she never finished it) was drowned in a chorus of, “Heavens, Hannah, as if anybody had time or opportunity on a campus as large as this!”

Caroline had other problems. Betty was right. Eunice was proving a white elephant.



Mrs. Mackintosh had been successful in finding a desirable house in an excellent location. An old friend of her husband's was taking his family East for two years, and was, naturally, delighted to find so reliable a tenant for his home. The house stood on a prominence that overlooked the bay. It was some distance from the campus, which was rather an advantage, since Eunice insisted upon keeping her own car. She was inclined to be generous with it and took Margaret with her to college each morning.

It was not a large house, but well arranged and amply commodious. The first floor consisted of a pleasant living room with an open fireplace; a smaller library well stocked with books; dining room and servants' quarters. The second floor was attractive and convenient. There were four bedchambers. The one at the front, as well as the one at the back, extended across the width of the house. One gave a magnificent view of the bay, the other of the Berkeley hills.

Eunice, probably because the hills reminded her of her mountain home, chose the back, giving Margaret the front. They were equally pleasant, charmingly furnished and comfortable. Mrs. Mackintosh took a smaller chamber on the same floor and the other was known from the first as Caroline's.

Occasionally on week-ends Caroline occupied it, to the delight of the entire family. There were times when she made a hurried visit to it; times when Mrs. Mackintosh called her, saying, "If it



is possible, will you come over, dear, I must talk with you."

Caroline knew what that call meant: Eunice was obstreperous; sulky or defiant. Sometimes she wondered why she had been so rash in her invitation to Eunice; why the Major had permitted her to hang such a millstone about her neck. She had occasion to recall his "Better think this thing over pretty carefully, Caroline; you are taking great responsibility upon yourself."

But, as usual, she had been determined. Her anxiety to help Margaret and her still greater desire to be of service in a case of need acting as a goad.

One of the greatest problems was Eunice's clothes. "Mercy! Caroline, who was that freak I saw you with to-day?" sometimes greeted her at lunch or dinner.

Or, "Anybody know that Middleton girl in Econ 19 A? They ought to get her in the circus this year."

"Friend of yours, isn't she, Caroline?" some one would invariably ask and Caroline would answer with cheeks aflame:

"She's an unfortunate little girl with more money than is good for her—and no father or mother! Please be charitable towards her. I think if you only understood, girls —"

A hush would die along the table to be broken with:

"Caroline, you are the best sport on the campus! Let anybody say a word to me —"



And the girl would roll up her sleeve and flourish her fork belligerently.

But the notoriety galled, nevertheless.

Sometimes there would be long talks in the wide bedroom with its pretty furniture and cretonne hangings. Caroline would beg and plead, Eunice would whine and cry—or worse still, become defiant.

“Who do you think you are?” she would cry in a rage, “to come bossing me. I’ll wear what I please and go where I please! I’m eighteen, ain’t I? I’ve got my own money!”

Caroline’s tears sometimes acted as a solvent for those terrible moods. Once she was forced to say, “You may give me back the little pearl ring, I think, Eunice. You do not appreciate my friendship—friendship I gave to you when you were a tiny girl. Hand it to me, please.”

Eunice’s eyes widened, tears rushed to them.

“Oh, please,” she cried, her voice dropping to a frightened whisper, “don’t take it away; you’ll hoodoo me. That’s my mascot!”

It was the plea of the superstitious and ignorant.

Margaret was absolutely helpless with her. Eunice’s type was beyond her understanding. She was not drawn to her, yet her patience was marvelous. There was a splendid loyalty behind her aversion.

“The situation seems impossible,” she said once to her mother, “but we must see the two



years through. We cannot wave a white feather in the face of Caroline's generosity."

And so efforts were redoubled; more charity exercised.

It was a happy day for Caroline when she found that Eunice had been called before a higher tribunal and her unhappy combination of color and style prohibited. An authoritative word had gone forth. She was given a choice between appropriate clothes and an exit from college.

It was during those days that Caroline's abhorrence for money grew. She hated its cheapness, its vulgarity. Eunice, ill-content and unable to appreciate the beauty of her surroundings, constantly shopped for the house. She added tawdry curtains to her room, glaring Chinese bric-a-brac atrocious in color and design; dragons, vases and tea sets; twisted serpentine chairs and teakwood tables.

But when she attacked the drawing-room, Mrs. Mackintosh's Irish foot came down with force.

"Not here, my child," she said authoritatively. "You may do as you like in your room, but this house belongs to me. You are my guest."

"My money's paying for it."

"Your money is paying for value received," Mrs. Mackintosh answered. "Remember that." Only her gentle dignity kept her from adding, "And what you are getting is very cheap at the price."

There was one never forgettable afternoon when Caroline was hurriedly called to the house. She



found Eunice with her trunks strapped and packed. She was going home.

The trouble had arisen over a trivial matter. Eunice had wanted to entertain at a mid-week frolic some of the young people she had met. She had engaged music and bought flowers, in fact prepared for a rather elaborate evening's entertainment, without asking any one's consent.

Margaret objected. "Have you spoken with Caroline about it?" she asked.

Eunice had not.

"But you know, Eunice, that it is not customary to entertain in mid-week. You are keeping other young people from their studies, to say nothing of your own loss of sleep and time."

"Lots of people give parties during the week —"

"But I do not know these friends —"

"You don't have to know them. I guess I can pick out the people I like without having them looked over."

When Mrs. Mackintosh held to her daughter's decision, Eunice packed her trunk, dismantled her room, and prepared to leave.

Caroline arrived as Eunice was putting on her hat and coat, heard the story, and taking Eunice into the guest room, locked the door.

No one knew just what happened behind that closed door — least of all Caroline. She emerged two hours later, rather dazed herself, but with Eunice's hand in hers.

"Eunice wants to ask your pardon, Mrs. Mack-



intosh," she said, leading the refractory girl into her presence. "She didn't quite understand, I think, but after this she will consult you in regard to her plans."

Followed a long letter to Jeff Taylor, asking for a decrease in Eunice's allowance. He was still her guardian. In Colorado, fortunately, a girl must reach twenty-one to manage her own property.

Caroline loved the hearty scrawl that brought back cheering news:

"I have been thinking for a long time that I wasn't doing right by Sissy, to let her have her own way, and to-day I consulted a lawyer about it. Hereafter, she will get just what any other girl in her position would have for comfort and decency. No more. I reckon it's a mighty good thing that she's got a girl like you behind her, for she was getting pretty heady before she left here. I don't want her to get boy-struck, neither. Ain't no girl got man-sense till she gets past twenty — considerable past. I thank you for your interest in Sissy, and you tell her for me that she's got to get down to business or I'll be taking a trip out there myself. Though I don't know as that would scare her much. She always could wrap me round her little finger. I'm darned glad she's got somebody she can't wheedle. Your friend, JEFF TAYLOR."

The months began to fly by. Christmas was spent with Mrs. Mackintosh, a very happy Christmas despite occasional homesick pangs. Of course there were the usual letters. Leigh's were



invariably entertaining. She was delighted with her home; a place just old-fashioned enough to coincide with her idea of dignity and respectability. It would have been impossible to imagine Leigh in a strictly modern house. She had accepted Blair's mother's household gods with thankfulness and appreciation. They were very like the things she had been reared with, a fact that prevented longing and homesickness. She was making friends rapidly; was interested in the little suburban church and in the community. She rather liked the East, though of course it was very different from the South or West. Alison had been in New York; more beautiful than ever; very stunning in her imported frocks and hats. Blair was well, the most adoring—and adored husband in all the world. She herself was stronger and freer from pain than ever before.

It was the word from home that depressed Caroline: "The house seems so still sometimes," Mrs. Ravenel wrote, "although Mayre and I are so much company for each other. Your father continues well, but I fear is somewhat hampered in his work by darling Leigh's absence, though he never complains. Maumy is getting quite feeble, cannot stand hard work any more. A new cook has taken her place for a while, a fact that distresses her. We should be glad to send her home for her declining days, but she will not consent to a separation from us."

Often Caroline's thoughts dwelt upon the old home. She could fancy how empty it must seem



with the family so depleted. She could scarcely imagine the stately rooms without Leigh's sunny presence. She could picture the Major, jogging along country roads alone in all kinds of weather — sometimes it seemed that she must fly to him — Mayre's desolation (Mayre was a lonely little creature at best) and her mother.

The thought of her mother always brought a wave of tenderness. How gentle she had always been. How poised and dignified. Never had she quarreled or bickered with her children. Never had she raised her voice in angry remonstrance.

If the thought ever crossed Caroline's mind that her mother had been indolent and self-centered, it was countered with another; she had preserved the sanctity, the dignity and the beauty of the home. The Major had disciplined, scolded, punished if need be — but she had held up ideals, traditions; instilled love and respect. Always her children would rise up and call her blessed, would remember her with beautiful affection.

And as Caroline grew older and entered other homes, she marveled more and more at the simplicity of her own. It was a place of rest and peace and growth. If there were difficulties, each solved, or tried to solve, his own. Even in the days of her father's illness, gray, somber days for her mother, there was no complaining, no borrowing of trouble; only childlike trust and patient endurance.

Often, too, she recalled the contentment that



had marked the home life. There was no striving for effect; no running after false gods; no greed or avarice. There was monotony sometimes — and longing, tempered with thanksgiving.

Perhaps Caroline thought a great deal about it all because of the changes that were so rapidly coming over the world. In Europe a great war was raging; a war that threatened her own beloved land. People were restless, apprehensive. Jimmy wrote:

“We are going to be in this thing sooner than we think. I feel that I should be there now, helping.”

Sometimes on the way home from the library at night, Biddy would voice his sentiments. “I can’t stand it much longer, Caroline; this thing makes my blood boil. France needs us — sooner or later I’m going to bolt.”

“What would you do, Biddy?” she would inquire with a pounding heart. Biddy’s friendship was very dear to her.

“There isn’t very much that I don’t know about an automobile, thanks to Emma’s disposition,” he would answer, with his boyish laugh. “I could handle a truck all right, or ‘chauf’ a general.”

And yet the weeks went on, happy and care-free, except for the still-dreaded mid-term exams. There was scarcely a ripple of excitement on the day’s calm. At week-ends there were the parties. Caroline’s scrap book began to bulge with dance programs and favors: her memorabilia (a blank



account book pressed into service) was filled with cartoons, clippings and kodaks.

The parties became never-to-be-forgotten memories: nights when the larger fraternities kept open house; when verandas and lawns were brilliantly strung with Chinese lanterns, and campus orchestras vied with each other in rollicking tunes. Times when one donned one's prettiest frock and went with one's nicest man from house to house, lingering for a dance or two, and then sauntering on to the next: Nickel Crawls, those dances were called, and the proceeds went for campus activities. There were the Formals, given by fraternities and sororities: elaborate functions. There were strolls up to the big "C" on the hill where one caught the wide sweep of the bay in the moonlight—the glimmering waters of the Golden Gate. There was the annual college circus—and the pyjamareno parade.

And there were others besides Biddy seeking Caroline's favor. He found that he must ask for dates early, to be sure of them.

Men were catalogued in her mind as Phi Kappas, D Us, Kappa Sigmas, Alpha Delts, etc. She accepted their invitations with all the pleasure and anticipation of youth; sometimes she went over to the city across the bay to dance with a crowd at one of the hotels, scurrying to catch the midnight boat home; flying through the hushed, dimly lighted streets on the noisy ferry cars, back to the sorority house.

And then, one day in the midst of fun and fes-



tivity, came a note from Jimmy, brief and buoyant. "Leaving to-morrow for the other side," it said. "Can't stand it any longer. Don't worry about me (perhaps I have nerve to think you will) and buck up mother when you can. She enjoys your letters. This war is going to be harder on mothers than on us. I shall be back for our tryst in August. Don't forget. This beastly slaughter isn't going to last forever."

For a week she went about in a daze. She spoke to Biddy of Jimmy's going to war. He stopped — they were, as usual, walking home from the library; it was rather a fixed habit — and looked down at her. "That's the stuff!" he said. "That's what every red-blooded American ought to do. I congratulate you on having such a friend."

And then April came, April with its warm spring breath and blossoming flowers. On the hills poppies lifted their yellow heads; the eucalyptus, rejuvenated, sent forth gray-green shoots that looked like dull shimmering satin in the sunshine. At the week-end, girls coming home from the country brought armfuls of wild lilac and Juda buds. Nature smiled in the face of a distraught and trembling nation. The first days of the week passed with its scholastic grind, its sorority functions, its city and country dances.

Then came the sixth! tragic and memorable day!

Caroline was coming out from her English class when she heard the newsboy's shrilling cry:



“War! War! War! America enters the Conflict!”

It struck at her, beat in upon her sensitive soul with the blow of an anvil. *War!* Hideous and terrible — brutal beyond description. It meant — what did it mean! Try as she would, her disturbed brain could not fathom its dire possibilities.

On the campus excited groups talked and gesticulated. Men passed her with set, determined faces. Some laughed; some were strangely, grimly silent. Girls, those who had brothers and sweethearts, wept openly.

At the house she found Betty huddled on her bed, her face white, her eyes staring wildly.

“Stan,” she cried, “he’ll have to go! He’s been wanting to, for a month or more, but I begged him not to —”

“Oh, no, Betty, you didn’t do that!”

The girl turned in a fury. “Don’t preach patriotism to me — you who have father, mother, sisters! Stan’s my *all!*”

The week dragged itself to an end. College was demoralized. Men were mustered into service. Dances ceased. The world, that had been so gay, so happy and self-sufficient, turned another side; a horrible, sinister, ghastly side, too terrible to face.

Early in May, Caroline went home, accompanied by Betty and Eunice. Mrs. Mackintosh and Margaret returned to the Lodge.

The summer passed in a maze of labor and anxiety. Mrs. Ravenel’s long drawing-room became



a workshop. Furniture was covered and stored; long tables set up. Surgical dressings were turned out in surprising quantities. Mrs. Ravenel and Mayre stopped whipping lace and embroidering linen; they rolled bandages — made pneumonia jackets. Often the doctor marveled at his wife's strength and devotion to the cause. Sometimes he tried to check her, but she answered, "My father, Captain Kirtley, once gave to the limit of his endurance for his country — I can do no less."

Betty drooped pitifully. Stanley had answered his country's call with the Yale unit. He had not sailed, but was still in the East, awaiting orders.

But Eunice Middleton blossomed under stress. She begged to be near Caroline, and Mrs. Ravenel gave her Leigh's room. She was still somewhat bizarre and crude; she still had moods and flights of temper, but on the whole, she was improved. Mrs. Ravenel and Mayre noticed it. "At least she doesn't say 'ain't' and she combs her hair decently," Caroline agreed hopefully.

Her allowance had been increased for war time needs, and she gave generously. She had not been trained to use her hands. She was awkward and slovenly with her bandages, but she ran errands, took telephone calls; helped Doctor Ravenel in the office, went with him on long professional visits.

Those rides meant greater growth of character than she herself imagined. There were talks, pre-



sumably casual, but with definite purpose on the Major's part.

Mrs. Ludlow was a constant help in the reconstructed drawing-room. She, too, worked early and late. She looked careworn, but her courage was inspiring.

In August the girls returned to college. The house on the hill was reopened. Eunice was back in her old quarters, rather glad, too, on the whole. She had grown very fond of Mrs. Mackintosh. Margaret was still alien. They never touched, though their relationship in the house was amicable enough. Margaret passed her in the halls with a smile, sometimes venturing, "How is college this semester?" Or, at table, "Mother says you are bringing up your grades. Fine! Keep the good work up."

But it was not the old campus. It was deserted, broken — apprehensive. In his opening speech to the students, the president looked over the Greek theater wistfully. "We have turned to bright colors," he said, noting the girls' brilliant sweaters — "pinks and blues, scarlet —"

He stopped there, missing the boys' somber tweeds that had so long flanked the worn stone steps. There was a great void; broken ranks on every side.

Caroline delved into her studies with a new zest. Scholastic requirements had been raised. Junior certificates held in abeyance. That meant that she could choose her course; drop tiresome mathematics and stupid sciences; redouble on



English and languages, turn to the cultural, and still graduate.

For her it was a wonderful and unexpected opportunity. She delved into the poets, she revelled in contemporary novels, strengthened her foundation in the classics. She awakened intellectually. Bit by bit her stories, scraps of verse, occasional editorials, appeared in the college paper. Finally she was added to the staff.

She kept her goal clearly in sight. She made plots for plays; dashed off scenarios at white heat; listed catching titles and incidents. Her bottom drawer became an olla podrida. In it were crammed newspaper clippings, social happenings, magazine articles. She was laying the cornerstone of her career.

For recreation she knitted; and she scrimped and saved. She made one dollar do the work of two.

Occasionally the old spirit of adventure attacked her. Often she was the ringleader in sorority pranks. Her devil sprang from his hidden lair and confronted her unaware. At times she was mischievous, daring, almost reckless. Few guessed how serious she was at heart. She had the faculty of shutting the world out of her hopes and despairs.

Betty drooped and faded under the burden. Stanley had gone across; his regiment, "The Mobile Hospital Unit" was stationed at Limoges.

Jimmy's letters were few and far between. He was nearing the front, Captain, now, in his regi-



ment. And Biddy Webster, true to his own prediction, was "chauffing" a French general.

It is strange how human nature asserts itself at critical moments. Leigh wrote, with true Southern spirit, that they were distressed at Blair's being rejected for army service because of an old heart trouble. Alison, that the war was getting on her nerves. She really couldn't stand it much longer; life was so melancholy and dull, though she really should not complain. Tevis's skill as a technical engineer was still detaining him in Washington at a dollar a year.

Autumn came, and with it the armistice. Christmas passed and spring followed. The boys were beginning to come home—the fortunate ones. Jimmy was in a Belgian hospital slowly recovering from a gas attack—it would be months before he saw Colorado again. Biddy was returning, unscathed. Stanley had seen hard service, but likewise had been spared. Alfred Feveral was not so fortunate. He had made the supreme sacrifice late in the summer.

And so Caroline's Junior year drew to a close, thanksgiving commingling with heartache.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### A SUMMER BY THE SEA

PLANS for summer vacation, at almost the last moment, took an unexpected turn. The Major wrote:

“Your mother, worn with war activities, is very much in need of a change. We have about decided to rent the house (houses could always be advantageously rented in the famous health resort) and join you for a couple of months in California. I am, however, a little afraid of the northern fogs and winds, and will try the southern part of the State.”

A few weeks later the family was comfortably located at a quiet beach. Mrs. Mackintosh, as usual, returned to the Lodge. She very generously asked Eunice to go with her, but Eunice clung to Caroline.

“If only I may be near you,” she begged; “there must be a good hotel at the beach.”

But Caroline was not yet ready to place Eunice in a hotel, and rather insisted upon her settling with her.

The plan proved satisfactory in every way. Late in June the family was surprised by a brief



visit from Leigh and Blair. Blair, like all men of the period, was worn and thin. He needed the bracing breezes of the Pacific to tone him up, make him fit for the autumn's work.

It was a happy, reunited family. Doctor Ravenel had been fortunate enough to secure a desirable cottage, plain but commodious, so they were not cramped for room. Maumy had been left behind, too feeble to stand the long journey. She was comfortably housed in the "Bap'tis" minister's home, as content as she could be anywhere away from her "fam'bly."

With three strong, able-bodied young women in the family, the services of a cook were dispensed with. Caroline and Eunice prepared breakfast and lunch. Dinner was procured at a near-by boarding house.

It proved to be the happiest summer imaginable. During Leigh's stay, there were long visits on the beach, where the girls sat with Mrs. Ravenel, idly chatting, not so much as a knitting needle in hand. Ten o'clock in the morning found them all under a brilliant umbrella on the white sand, a little apart from the crowd. The girls learned to swim in the foaming surf. Eunice became expert in a short time, and Caroline also loved the frolic.

Leigh had greatly improved in the short year of her married life. She looked stronger. The weak spine that had always been a source of heartache to her family had greatly improved. Blair was a devoted and considerate husband.



Doctor and Mrs. Ravenel often gazed upon them with joy and thanksgiving. It seemed an ideal match.

Mayre sketched to her heart's content. Some of her water colors attracted attention, and, almost before she was aware of the fact, a market was provided. Tourists stopped at the cottage weekly, then daily, for her bits of the sea, caught in its varying moods. Before the summer was over, her small bank had been discarded and a savings account opened.

Caroline and her father took long walks along the sandy strip of beach, pausing to watch the sea change from blue to green, ruffle its white-capped waves for a storm, or glimmer peacefully in the glow of the setting sun. Sometimes they carried a bit of lunch and a book. Caroline read to him; explaining passages from poems she had labored over: Browning, Tennyson and Keats. They talked of the masters, and the Major renewed his own college days through her experiences. And he began to gain: his sunken cheeks took on a new roundness, his shoulders lifted. Day by day he was storing strength for duties that lay ahead.

A week before Leigh's departure another guest came. He walked in quite unceremoniously one morning, hanging his cap and summer overcoat on the peg in the rustic hall, where they remained, except at intervals, for some time. It was Jeff Taylor.

"I'd a heap rather stay here than over at that tony hotel," he said wistfully, "if you could put



me up. I got kind of homesick for Sissy. First time I been separated from her fer so long, since she was that high." He measured a short distance from the floor.

So Jeff was comfortably installed in a small guest room, much to his delight.

"I'm used to these here cabins," he said, appraising the redwood walls, bare of plaster. "And that's a good fireplace. I'll cut you up some logs; nights is pretty chilly here with that old ocean a cavortin' round."

Indeed, he proved an ideal guest in more ways than one. He did provide wood; not only wood, but, much to the family's amazement, a touring car, so that the wonders of the country might be explored. He taught Caroline how to cook a steak; broil bacon; make flapjacks. Often he carried the family to the city ten miles away for an evening's entertainment. In the bosom of the family he became "Mr. Croesus", but the title was lovingly bestowed.

His roughness was often embarrassing to Eunice. It is difficult to measure progress day by day, but looking back, estimating it by months, results are often surprising. Eunice had really grown, culturally, at least. Her development loomed large against the background of Uncle Jeff's crudities.

"I do wish he would use his fork more," she said once in apology to Leigh. It was so easy to confide one's annoyances to Leigh. They were walking along the sandy beach, as they did occa-



sionally. "I'm just mortified to death when he tries to gather up peas on his knife. It's so silly. He must know they will roll off. And his grammar—it just kills me to have him get to telling one of his stories with: 'An' then I come along, an' when we had went'—And if he just wouldn't say 'gosh' and 'gol darn.' I think I will tell him."

"Jeff is an old man, dear," Leigh comforted, "and he is among friends. No one is criticizing him. We must remember the life he has led, free and beautiful up in the hills, away from conventions. He can teach us many things, even though he does not speak our English. Besides, life is behind him now. It doesn't matter. You must not depress him with useless arguments."

"I know," Eunice considered, appeased by Leigh's wisdom, "and he is so kind. I don't suppose any one will ever know what he has done for the poor people up at the 'Creek.' That time we went up there from the Springs—I was so little, but I remember—when he took us in his cabin and gave us food and shelter, father was quite 'down and out', as they say up there. He taught me to call him Uncle Jeff; that's what every one calls him up there. They just simply adore him. Why, there are dozens of people he helps; people who have grown discouraged. Mining looks so simple. You only hear of those who are successful. Hundreds and hundreds lose all they ever possessed—most of them do, in fact. Jeff has a sort of religion all his own. He never goes to



church. He just goes way off in the cañon sometimes on Sunday, to the highest place he can find, and has a little service of his own. I remember his telling mother about it once — and she cried. I can see her now, turning her back on him and wiping her eyes on the corner of her gingham apron. He's really quite a wonderful man in his way.

“There was Polly Mason: a girl who was a little wild. Her parents had come up there to try their fortunes, as mine had. We all lived up on the side of the mountain — near the ‘Homestead.’ We could look down on the lights twinkling in the town below; they looked like fairy candles blinking and shining. Sometimes we could hear music, if the wind was right — music from places that we had never seen. Polly was dreadfully lonesome. She loved pretty things; nice ribbons to wear to school and red frocks such as they wore in the camp. But she couldn't have them. Her people, nice folks, too, had barely enough to eat. Her father was sinking a shaft not far away, hoping against hope that he would strike pay dirt, which Jeff felt sure he wouldn't. Well, anyway, Polly got to strolling down the hill, nearer the music. Her mother got to worrying. Jeff saw the trouble. He went down to the Springs and bought her the prettiest outfit he could find, and sent her back to an aunt in the East until she got more sense. A mining camp is a very wicked place, you know. Well — that's just *one* thing. I could tell you dozens!”



Sometimes as they cleared the table after breakfast or lunch, Eunice told Caroline more of her own history. Her people had migrated from somewhere along the southern border of Illinois. They were plain, honest people, but her father always had the wanderlust. He had carried her mother all over the country, seeking his fortune, sure that it was waiting for him somewhere.

Caroline gathered that she had been above him in station. "Mother always liked things nice," Eunice would add; "she was naturally dainty. She said her mother was, before her. She always talked about what we would do when we struck it. I was to be educated, to have a lovely home and the right kind of friends —"

She stopped.

"Then just as it was all in sight, she had to go. Wasn't it strange? Isn't life the funniest, anyway?"

Caroline often wondered just what effect Jeff's roughness had on her mother's sensitive nature. Mrs. Ravenel was the quintessence of refinement. But if she felt antagonism, she never showed it. She exchanged few words with her chance guest; their worlds did not meet, but she never gave the impression of snobbishness: only the parvenu resorts to that. The West — and the war, had taught her many things. They had broken barriers.

Sometimes under the roof of the little half-story bedroom where Caroline and Mayre slept, they visited. Gradually Caroline found that



Mayre had plans and ambitions; she longed for greater breadth and experience in art.

"You remember," Mayre said, "how we used to talk when we were children, about what we would do when Great-aunt Caroline died and left us her fortune: I was to go abroad—even in those days—"

"And I was to have a circus—Well, sometimes I think I didn't altogether miss my aim—those first few months with Eunice. She was wild enough to give me all the thrills I craved."

"But it is really wonderful how she's coming out. I noticed her at dinner to-night. She is growing quite pretty. And isn't it marvelous how she has veered from her gorgeous plumage to the most severe costumes. She wears but one ring now—the little pearl—"

"Merely a fad, my dear," Caroline yawned, sleepily. "At present her favorite actress eschews all jewels and tailors her clothes to a fare-ye-well. But Sissy is coming along, no doubt about it. When Mrs. Mackintosh gets through with her—she'll be the real thing. Just wait."

It was during those happy summer days that Caroline received one of Madame Wakefield's long-delayed letters.

"I have neither the inclination nor the courage to write," she said. "England is so desolate—as desolate as my own heart and fireside. Alfred is gone. His brother, Charles FEVERAL, lonely and disconsolate—lives. At present we are a tortured and bereaved nation. Scarcely a



home that death has not touched. But I must not cloud your young heart with my disappointments. You will live to see peace rise above the ashes of our dead hopes, and be happy."

There followed an account of her home life, her ambitions for her people, her desire to have Caroline visit her after she had been graduated. She feared she should never see America again. She was far from well. War had taken both joy and health from her.

Jeff's visit ended in three weeks, but he insisted upon leaving the car behind him, small pay for the kindness that had been shown him. Doctor Ravenel was to ship it home and use it for his own convenience. This, of course, Doctor Ravenel would not do, but a satisfactory settlement was agreed upon, and he purchased it at a reasonable figure. Selah's days were numbered.

The night before the cottage was closed for the summer, Caroline had a stroll by the seaside with her father.

"I have about decided," he said to her surprise, "to leave Mayre in Berkeley with you. Mrs. Mackintosh may, perhaps, be willing to let her board with her, if she has the room. It would add to her income. Mayre wants to study, and we must make the opportunity for her."

"Oh, but Major — what will you do with us all away!"

"That is life, my dear child. We still have you — in the flesh. We must learn to be thankful."



“But what will you do with the big house?”

“Continue to rent it, I think, until you come home again. It is possible I may be able to keep my office — or I can find one nearer town. Your mother and I will be quite comfortable in a hotel or a good boarding house, and she will be less lonely. Maumy’s day of usefulness is past. I shall try to send her South this winter.”

Caroline walked in silence. Maumy was the last straw. Childhood was over. Life with its stern realities faced her.

“I can’t bear it, Major,” she said. “I can’t!”

For a moment neither spoke. The Major drew an arm through hers. “As people grow older, Caroline, they live more and more in the past,” he said. “That is what I shall have to do. There are precious memories of the old home; there is your return to await; God willing, there are years of usefulness ahead for both of us. Let us not despair. Let us hope. I have not yet let go your hand. Remember that. I still hold it, with all the old affection.”

It had slipped along her arm, that kind, comforting hand, until it found hers. Caroline’s met it in a warm clasp.

For a long time they walked in silence.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### A HOUSE PARTY

CAROLINE, approaching her twenty-second year, had changed but little: she had rounded out perhaps, grown a trifle taller. She was light, supple, with a mild enthusiasm that never failed to attract. While not an athletic girl in any sense of the word—dreamers never are—she possessed a certain alertness that passed for physical strength.

She had grown more comely with her chrysalis years, and at times was really beautiful. Men invariably turned to watch her as she passed. There was something in her quick step, in her striking, clean-cut profile, the sparkle of her brilliant eyes, that invited admiration.

There was also a joyousness about her as compelling as it was wholesome. When her lips parted in a smile, her face lighted. When she reached out a hand to acknowledge an introduction, something went with it. Her professors called it personality: her friends, comradeship.

The girls at the sorority house loved her with a devotion akin to worship. If they desired representation on the campus, they chose Caroline.



If they wanted a lark, she was the leader; if they were in sorrow, they turned to her for sympathy and counsel. It was not surprising that she should have been chosen to succeed Nell Neally as Senior house president, though she protested with every excuse imaginable.

"I think you really owe it to us," the younger girls said. "Look at the success you have had with Eunice Middleton; you have literally metamorphosed her — you and Margaret Mackintosh together —"

"Mrs. Mackintosh, you mean," Caroline would hastily interpose.

"Well, you've put her on the map," some one suggested. "Next year, if she stays, she will be quite a rage."

"She will stay. Mrs. Mackintosh has promised to see her through her four years."

"What will she do then?"

Caroline shook her head. "Then," she said, "I shall no longer be responsible. I hope that she will meet a good man and marry him, as Betty did. Some girls are made for homes. Eunice is one of them."

College had changed materially in Caroline's fourth year. Shu de Li had graduated and returned to China with her family, her father having gone into business there. Betty, unable to endure the separation from Stanley, had left college and married him, settling down comfortably to await his medical diploma. Hannah Rosser was gone; so were Nell and Estelle. The flatiron



room had new tenants. Betty had donated her furniture as a memorial to the happy days spent there. Caroline had taken a single room on the second floor.

The changes saddened Caroline. Senior year in college, she found, was altogether different from the other three. One thought more about one's studies than of formal dances, and one missed, to the point of tears, old friends and faces.

It had been Caroline's intention to leave the sorority house and take up her abode with Mrs. Mackintosh. She wanted to be with Margaret, but finding that the girls really desired her presence in the capacity of house president, she gave up the plan and settled down among them.

Depression was still in the air. Boys were returning home, some of them disabled, some crippled, some too weary to take up the work where they had left it for the call to arms.

Biddy had changed. He was no longer gay and light-hearted. There was a worn, world-weary look in his eyes. He was thin and haggard. Even Emma did not attract him as of old. "I've had enough of automobiles to last me the rest of my life," he said, when Caroline tried to revive his interest. For long intervals, when they walked home from the Libe or up to the "C", he was gloomily silent. His thoughts were far away. Caroline brought every power to bear upon his moods. She was gay; she was interesting; she was humorous. She increased her stock of jokes. All fell like lead upon Biddy's sodden spirits.



“Don’t worry about me,” he would say gratefully. “I’ll come out of this in time, but now —” His hand would go over his eyes as if to shut out haunting memories.

One day at mid-week he said to her, “I’m going home Friday. Mother’s been rather anxious for me to bring some people down for the week-end. If I can get the crowd together will you come — you and Mayre?”

She could not refuse. She knew that he needed life and gayety. His mother evidently saw his need.

From the beginning the journey proved delightful: the long road winding like a ribbon through city and country; the soft autumn breezes; the college patter that went on in the car, the jokes and laughter.

Mayre drew a quick breath when they came upon the quaint old house tucked away between sun-tipped hills,—a dwelling such as she had dreamed of, with its trees and shrubs, its spacious gardens.

There was something very distinctive about the place.

“Built over a hundred years ago,” Biddy explained, noting her puzzled gaze. “Adobe. We never know when it is hot — or cold. Those old walls were made to endure. Of course the governor has remodeled the place. We are quite comfortable and up-to-date.”

The house set high. One climbed a flight of stone steps to reach the wide veranda and enter



the long living room in front. There were wings on either side. Between them ran a court filled with flowers and spraying fountains, according to the old Spanish plan.

"But you said it was just a plain, old-fashioned house, Biddy," Caroline exclaimed. "It is really a wonderful country home —"

"It's wonderfully comfortable," Biddy said, and went to find his mother.

Mrs. Webster fitted into the surroundings: a sweet-faced woman with hair just beginning to silver.

Biddy threw an arm about her as he made the introductions. One could feel the affection that existed between them. A moment later Mr. Webster strolled in with his daughter and the picture was complete.

"I am sure that you are all very tired and dusty, and will want to freshen up a bit before dinner," Mrs. Webster suggested. She pressed a button near the door. A young Chinese girl appeared and led the way to the guest chambers.

Caroline followed in a dream, feeling suddenly as though she had stepped into the Orient. The little maid in her native costume pattered ahead softly, smiling as she opened the door to one of the most fascinating chambers Caroline had ever seen.

"Ah Sing, he will bring bags, right 'way," she said. "The bath it is here, and the bell, it is also here, by the door."



She backed out of the room with the ease of a *débutante*. Caroline turned to Mayre.

“Did you ever see anything so cunning in your life? It was all I could do to keep from squeezing her, in those scarlet pantaloons and that sky-blue jacket!”

The room was gay with chintzes and white wicker furniture. But it was the French door leading to the sleeping porch that drew Caroline’s attention. The maid had opened it.

“Oh, Mayre, do come here,” Caroline cried when she had taken a peep.

There were two beds, snowy white in their fresh coverlets, except at the foot where down comforts gave a delectable splash of blue; the beds were raised on a little dais.

“Do you see why they are raised that way?” Mayre whispered, her artistic eyes solving the mystery. “It is to catch the view down the valley. Fancy lying in bed here — waking rather — and watching nature paint the dawn. Can’t you see the curtain going up — all misty with rose and silver?”

A knock interrupted the question. Chan, the little maid, stood in the doorway.

“Mrs. Webster say we dine, not till seven ’clock; perhaps young ladies like rest for hour,” she said.

Later, as Caroline and Mayre left the room, a musical chime rang the hour. Caroline had dressed in a fluffy yellow organdy. Around her throat she had clasped a string of amber beads



that coaxed warm lights into her hazel eyes. Mayre thought she had never seen her half so attractive.

The dining room was a place of open windows, birds and flowers. It seemed, almost, to be a part of the patio with its splashing fountains and blooming plants.

"What a wonderful place to dine," Caroline whispered to Biddy's father as she opened her napkin and looked about.

Mr. Webster's smile broke pleasantly.

"We are fond of it," he admitted. "Dining out of doors helps the appetite. Do you like the country?"

"I really don't know very much about it — this kind of country."

It was when they were having coffee in the patio later that Caroline said to Biddy:

"I have an early engagement in the morning. I'm going over the ranch with your father before breakfast. I'm going to see the grapevines and the orange trees; the dogs and calves!"

"I'm glad that you and the governor hit it off," Biddy said, and his face lighted with the old enthusiasm.

The trip over the ranch proved a delightful experience. Caroline had wakened early. She had watched nature ring up the curtain on a drowsy world; had seen the dawn in the East. And she had enjoyed Biddy's father, quite as much as she had ever enjoyed Biddy. She had thrilled at his tales of the early days; marveled



at his descriptions. She watched him as he pointed out improvements and told of early struggles to make the old place pay. She caught his enthusiasm, his love of home, his pride in the land's response to a kindly touch.

"I don't know," he said, a little thoughtfully, "whether my lad is going to get the same joy I've had out of the old place or not. I doubt it sometimes. One has to build to appreciate — serve in order to reap. Things come too easily to this generation. We are not always fair to you. We spoil you, surfeit you — and then wonder at your satiety."

He shook his head slowly.

"I suppose his happiness will depend largely upon the kind of a wife he brings home. Some girls wouldn't care for the life here —" He stopped there, as if broaching too intimate a subject.

It was later in the day that Biddy announced plans for the evening.

"We are going to motor over to the beach for a moonlight supper," he said.

The arrangements had been thoughtfully made. Biddy's fraternity brothers and the young women who had been invited with them, including Mayre, were to take Emma, Biddy and Caroline following in a smaller roadster. Mrs. Webster, with her husband and the servants, would appear later with the supper.

It was a long ride. On the way the party passed Mrs. Mackintosh's stately home with the



little Lodge tucked away in the rear. Biddy explained:

“Mr. Mackintosh, a charming old Scotchman, well known about here, was never very successful financially. All he left at his death was the home. I believe Mrs. Mackintosh rents it to very good advantage and lives in the little house nearby.”

Caroline insisted upon having a look at the Lodge. Margaret had so often spoken of it. Fortunately a blind had been raised and she could see the comfortable room within, plain almost to barrenness, but that did not surprise her. Margaret's rigid economy during their days together at “The Tubs” had given an idea of their circumstances.

Caroline mused for the next few miles. She was thinking of Margaret in her present surroundings. Difficult as Eunice had been, order was coming out of chaos. Eunice was improving, Margaret was preparing to fight life's battles, splendidly trained for the struggle. It was good to know that through Eunice's superfluous wealth both were profiting. She took no credit to herself. Mrs. Mackintosh had wrought the miracle, with tact and patience.

They had begun to climb a steep hill when Biddy spoke. Slowly the sun had waned and twilight deepened.

“Don't turn your head,” he said; “I want you to get your first glimpse of the sea from the top. Keep your eyes to the East.”



Caroline saw it first — a great yellow moon rising above the tip of the hill. They stopped for a moment to watch it sail. But it was the next stop that brought a stifled exclamation. Biddy had driven on to a point of some prominence.

“Now,” he said, and turned so that she faced the waters of the mighty Pacific. “There’s your view! Nothing like it in all America, if I do say it who shouldn’t!”

Caroline sat spellbound. For a moment she could not speak. She was always moved by beauty in any form. Ordinarily, she could control her leaping emotions, but to-night the magnificence of the scene quite overwhelmed her.

“It is the silver sea, isn’t it?” she said when she could find words. “I have often heard of it — and read of it, but this is my first real vision. It’s too beautiful to talk about; anyway, my English isn’t adequate.”

They left the car and wandered to the very edge of the brown hill, sitting in silence while the moon rose, showering its reflective light upon the trembling sea. For a long time they sat there. Caroline’s memory stirred with bits of half-forgotten verse. Much to her surprise, when she forgot, Biddy supplemented. She had not dreamed that he could produce those odds and ends from antiquated masters in tones that showed appreciation. When she began, “How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank! Here we will sit, and let the sound of music” — and could get no farther, he went on, “creep in our ears; soft still-



ness, and the night, become the touches of sweet harmony.”

He was shy when she complimented him, apologizing in boyish fashion. “Had a course in that old duck once,—Shakespeare. Gifford made me memorize.”

But he urged Caroline on. Her low voice, sweet with its Southern accent, intrigued him, and the night invited poetry. “It was made for it,” he said.

Perhaps it was the moonlight; perhaps it was the great silence that wrapped itself about them; perhaps it was Caroline’s sympathetic presence, but Biddy forgot the horrors of the past year. He talked as he had not talked for months — of his boyhood; of experiences out on those shimmering waters; his home; his people. He spoke of his ambitions — his hopes —”

When they rose to go, his eyes were very tender. But only the soft wind, scampering on to the sea, and the gentle nodding flowers, shared Caroline’s confidence.

At the beach a huge bonfire greeted them. Ah Sing and his wife were busy with the supper. Caroline caught the odor of beefsteak broiling, coffee simmering, bacon sizzling.

“Oh, how good it smells!” she cried, drinking in the appetizing draughts. “Isn’t there something I can do to help? I am an experienced picnicker.”

Mrs. Webster stretched forth a friendly hand.

“You may sit right down here with me and



get this view. I have never seen the water more beautiful," she said. "It is in its happiest mood."

Next morning, the dawn found Caroline still sleeping. It was the patter of little Chan's feet in the room that finally awakened her.

"It is Sunday," Chan called softly, "and your breakfast, it will be served here. Will you have it in the room, or on the porch in the shade of the awning?"

"Here, please, Chan," Mayre answered. "It will be glorious. I have heard the birds calling in my sleep for hours."

"Not in your sleep, Miss. It was high in the fig tree there."

It was a dainty breakfast that Chan served: mixed fruits in tall iced glasses; coffee with thick country cream; golden muffins and honey.

Mayre's glance took in the garden below, wandering from the fruit trees to the brown hills.

"I don't believe heaven could be more beautiful—or restful," she said. "I almost envy the girl who will some day fall heir to it all."



## CHAPTER XXV

### SUCCESS

WINTER found the sorority house gripped by influenza. Caroline was among the first to contract the dreaded disease. Days were filled with horror and apprehension — each a separate agony. The flatiron room became a hospital. Nurses were scarce, almost unattainable.

Eunice Middleton, aroused to what Caroline's protection and friendship had meant to her, seemed crazed with anxiety. She rushed to the sorority house with horror-stricken eyes.

"Caroline!" she cried. "Where is she? Take me to her."

She was refused admittance to Caroline's room. She went away with something of the old determination upon her, returning in half an hour with an ambulance and nurse.

"Please," she begged Mrs. Rankin, "let me take her home. Mrs. Mackintosh has the room all ready. We can give her better care there." In the end she had her way.

Three days later, when Caroline had safely passed the crisis, she opened her eyes in Eunice's



quiet room overlooking the hills. Eunice, pale and watchful, was on her knees beside her. "You mustn't speak," she whispered; "you are too weak. Please, I insist."

Caroline's gaze left the anxious face to wander over the room, then fell to the strange bed upon which she lay; it was all too unbelievable, she had no recollection of coming; on — on, her gaze traveled —

Suddenly it halted; rested at her own hand, no longer brown, but deathly white and thin. It lay on the counterpane limp and helpless. She looked closer — tried to lift it, to see what it was that circled one of her fingers. Presently her face lighted with a wan smile. She understood. It was a little ring set with a cluster of pearls. Eunice's mascot!

Spring brought a reaction. The campus sprang to life again. Dances were resumed. Biddy revived. He even drove Emma, coming for Caroline after her work was done, for a spin into the country. Sometimes they went over to the city for dinner; not an unusual custom among student friends. Occasionally they lingered for a movie or a good play. There was at least a semblance of the old gaiety.

But Caroline was too busy for many frivolities. Her studies were difficult, her strength limited after her illness. Still she worked, sometimes far into the night. Only a few months were left of college life. She was eager to attain a goal she had set for herself — a goal that would mean



her first taste of success, if she accomplished her desire.

Each year a play was given in the Glade; an original play, the contest open to all students. For two years Caroline had been watching this opportunity to try her ability, waiting until she had gained the knowledge and technic to exploit her talent. She went about gathering her material; the plot had long lain in her mind, building her foundation, raising the skeleton of her ingenuous fancy.

She had founded the play on a poem beloved of her childhood; the contest of an immortal god with a man for the love of an earthly maiden. Perhaps her old idea of angels governing the destinies of men may have entered into the general plan, for she merely used the poem as a suggestion, working out her own ideas with bold originality.

The Glade, with its friendly oaks, its murmuring stream, its miniature hills and soft fragrant breezes, helped to idealize her plot and situations. She spent hours going over the ground, marking out her setting, whetting her eager fancy with the tiny forest's wondrous possibilities.

The play was in blank verse, strong in poetic feeling; correct in its mythological atmosphere, for with interest aroused, Caroline was a conscientious and painstaking student.

No one knew of her ambition except Mayre, for since Betty's and Shu de Li's departure, Caroline had few intimates. Mayre was pressed into



service to design the immortal's diaphanous costumes, and the mortal's earthly ones. She drew colored charts showing the gods' chase on the velvety downs, their long flowing draperies floating in the breeze; the dances of the nymphs. She made maps of stage settings according to Caroline's instructions.

For Mayre, the year had been one of awakening dreams and satisfied desires. She had made her own circle of friends, mostly art students. She had her little round of pleasures; her few successes. She lacked Caroline's magnetism, but her refinement was always an open sesame to the most desirable circles.

Association with strangers had made her less shy, given her more confidence. Sometimes, seeing her walking across the campus with a mighty Senior at her side, loaded with art books and sketching materials, Caroline had her doubts about Mayre's foreordination to old-maidenhood. She looked so pretty with her soft brown hair blown by the wind, her blue eyes sweet and eager.

Caroline loved an occasional night at Mrs. Mackintosh's. Sometimes there were little dinner parties, when Biddy was bidden and the tall Senior who carried Mayre's books home; Eunice and her friends, too, approved by the family. Sometimes after dinner there would be music, dancing to the phonograph. Once in a while Margaret entertained serious looking men and women who talked economics, spoke of labor situations and socialism. On those occasions Caroline sat



back and listened, sometimes growing very sleepy, though she tried not to show it. Margaret's brilliancy still dazzled her, she could not keep up with the strides of her keen mind. She worshipped her as many do a shrine, something above and beyond her own dream world.

And Margaret, with the clear student's mind, often envied Caroline her versatility, her adaptability, above all her personality. When Caroline complimented her, as was often the case, Margaret would say with a sigh, "Oh, my dear, I am just an old grind! There are millions like me. Be thankful that the good Lord stamped you with individuality."

As the year went forward, cares multiplied at the sorority house. It is difficult, at twenty-two, to become a disciplinarian. Freshmen were often troublesome. Sometimes Caroline, remembering her own advent into college life, closed an eye to indiscretions. She knew that floundering age: dangerous, yet somehow protected. Eunice had passed it in safety. Nine girls out of ten did. They were not half so bad as society liked to paint them. Youth overflows with life and spirit; she understood its moods and vagaries. Who better?

Sometimes she envied those fresh rosy-cheeked young things their frolics; youth was perennial within her. It was always bubbling up, goading her to the same gay antics. There were days when she too wanted to fling books to the wind and tramp with a charming companion in the



hills, or forsake duties for dinner across the bay and a dance at one of the big, noisy show places. She loved the color and blare and lure of life! Just as she loved its solitudes.

Being a Senior meant stupid conventionalities, she sometimes thought on Friday night, as she sat at home engaged in a game of bridge with Susan Stirling, Marian Burdick and Fanchon Donaldson, girls who were still in college working for their Master's-degree. Not that she was without invitations, but she was too weary to accept them. A game of bridge rested her; dancing unfitted her for the demands of the week.

Yet she had her dissipations: tramps through the woods with Biddy. Often they stopped at the Varsity shop for sandwiches which he stuffed into his deep coat pocket, along with candy and small cakes: that meant lunch in the hills. And Biddy still gave her his confidence. Sometimes she glimpsed those terrible days that he had struggled through over-seas. Sometimes she caught the gay lights of Paris; interesting impressions of foreign travel.

And often, often she thought of Jimmy, convalescing in a strange land. Sometimes there was word from him: an almost illegible scrawl that made her heart thump disgracefully and brought a lump to her throat. But his mother's letters were encouraging. She had gone over to be with him — was bringing him home in June. She promised his complete recovery in time, but the waiting was tedious and harassing.



Other letters made her long for vacation. The Major and her mother were counting the days. They had been considering an offer to sell the big house, keeping the old furniture to be distributed among the girls,—all that they would not need in a cottage. There were so many pretty places to be had and quite cheap, down along Broadmore, an ideal location. One could have a garden; there were singing birds in the near-by fields and cañons; the breezes were cooler, more invigorating.

Caroline read between the lines. The Major was preparing for a comfortable old age. His cares had lessened. She and Mayre would soon be self-supporting. It had always been his idea to have his daughters try their wings before settling into matrimony, though Mrs. Ravenel could not bear the thought.

“We are only hesitating,” he wrote, “because we wonder if you and Mayre would be happy in the country. Still there would be the car. One can get about so easily these days. I have given up night visits altogether and confine my practice to consultations and office work. Of course I shall continue to serve as long as I have strength, and my patients’ confidence.” He also added, “Dorwin (Maumy’s son) writes that Maumy is quite happy in her cabin near his own and that she stood the trip South remarkably well for one of her years, though she sadly misses her family in the West.” Then quite peremptorily, “Find time to write her.”



Not by the wildest flight of her imagination could Caroline picture strangers in the red house facing the Peak. It was hallowed for all eternity with the spirits of the loving family that had dwelt there.

How much the old place had meant to her — to all of them! How many happy hours she had spent in the tower room; in her father's office — on the old veranda. Was it possible she should know those days no more? "Was life always shifting, changing, turning from gold to drab?" she wondered.

But she wrote back:

"Of course I can see how absurd it would be for you and Mother to go on in the old way. You had to make the change to the hotel and it seems to have worked out fairly well. Perhaps the new plans may be equally satisfactory. But, somehow, life seems to be passing us by with a wave and farewell these days. I notice it here. Girls I knew intimately a year ago are scattered to the four winds. I suppose the only thing to do is to project one's desires and ambitions far enough ahead of one's loves and opportunities to make the race worth running.

"As to the house. Of course you must sell it. It is too big and troublesome for Mother; servants too scarce, to be depended upon. But, if you do sell, try to find some one with children. Somebody who will love it; somebody who will sing in the halls and laugh on the veranda; somebody who will spend hours, as we did, at the telescope, and clear the drawing-room for parties. Those old walls have always responded to happiness: the queer old quirks and turns and twistings are as full of mystery as fairy palaces."



It took courage to go on:

“Mayre and I also have our dreams. Sometimes when we are alone (which is not often) we plan a little studio in New York, where she can paint and design; and I can have a little cubbyhole for my desk and filing case. ‘Ravenel and Ravenel’ we are going to be — on the door, you know, and to the public. Can you see us courting fame up under one of those sky-scraping roofs with two or three Kirtley heirlooms to give us atmosphere and comfort?”

April saw the beginning of Caroline’s conquest. Her play was chosen out of the many submitted. The sorority house went wild with joy. Congratulations were accompanied with flowers; they were heaped in the little second-story chamber, they decorated the dining room; parties were given. The flatiron room opened its doors. For the second time Caroline’s birthday was toasted in song and laughter. The girls brought gifts and libations. They went through mock ceremonies, crowning their president with garlands. It was a happy time, one long to be remembered.

Margaret celebrated the event with a dinner for Caroline’s closest friends. “I little thought,” she said, toasting the honored guest, “that when I bumped into Caroline, three years and more ago, scattering her books in every direction, that I was prostrating myself before genius!”

As to the actual production of the play, Caroline had but the dimmest recollection. She remembered only the hard weeks of preparation;



the rehearsals, the confusion,—and then, a wondrous night out under the stars when some one brought her from the leafy bower that served as a greenroom in deed and in truth; of standing surprised and shy while her name was called and the Glade resounded with applause.

She only knew that her greatest wish, could it have been granted just then, would have been to see the Major's face light with happiness, to hear his softly whispered words of encouragement and praise.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### COMMENCEMENT

COMMENCEMENT was not the thrilling climax to her four years' college career that Caroline had imagined. By the time she was ready to receive her diploma, the campus had taken on a deserted, cleaned-out appearance that spelled dejection. Undergraduates, free from trying examinations and exacting house rules, had fled to near-by homes. Only upper classmen and ambitious post-graduates remained for the final exercises.

The Seniors' pilgrimage, owing to the absence of the Major, whom she had expected up to the last moment, was shed of its anticipated glory. Caroline had so often pictured that triumphant march, with her father following the procession, proud and interested, but the Major's practice, had, as usual, raised a barrier between pleasure and duty. He had written Caroline:

"You cannot possibly regret my absence from your final exercises as I do, but a desperately sick child, hovering between life and death, leaves no question as to my decision. A physician's life is a consecration to duty, and you, my dear child, disappointed as you are, would



not have me falter. But I shall be with you in spirit, watching you as you wind your way through your beautiful campus, stopping at your various buildings for your last farewells, as you have so definitely pictured. My congratulations upon your attainment. I am proud and happy when I think of your achievement, for a college diploma means more than a recognition of work accomplished. It means perseverance and application: equipment for the journey along that great highway called Life. Our love to you. Our prayers for continued success.”

And yet, shorn of its greatest attraction, the pageant remained a vital spot in Caroline's memory. Often, as she climbed “the steep highway”, the picture came back to her. She lived again that sweet May morning; caught the tang of the ocean air that swept the campus, laden with the perfume of flowers and budding trees; saw the women in their white gowns — their parasols gay with class colors raised above their heads; the men in white flannels, their blue serge coats contrasting pleasantly with the women's spotless array.

Sometimes brief snatches of speeches made beneath the arching trees, or in the shadow of a familiar building, came back with added force, or she beheld the profile of a beloved professor silhouetted in the throng.

She could scarcely realize that she had come to the end of her college life, as she moved forward in the procession; dazed a little; her happiness marred by the keen edge of disappointment. If



only the Major's face had been one of those peering through the crowd!

The senior luncheon, too, merry with innovations, had left its impression. Would she ever forget the long table,—a garden of flowers. Or the dainty basket heaped with telltale posies, passed between courses. Shyly, and with burning blushes, the engaged girls had drawn an orange blossom. With pretended resignation others had reached for the ominous blue bachelors button.

But, after all, it was the spirit of desolation at the sorority house that cut deepest into her consciousness, gave her a feeling of finality. She realized, for the first time, that life had a way of dividing itself into chapters. She had closed the first one years before — when she helped Maumy fasten the battered door of the old Kirtley kitchen. The second, when she said good-by to the tower room. And now — now it was farewell to these dearly beloved associations.

She returned to the house from the last of her dissipations, one afternoon, to find it empty. The halls were deserted. In the living room the blinds were drawn, the piano closed and locked.

Caroline paused in the doorway. A flood of memories swept over her. How well she remembered her first night there. The girls had tried to cheer her drooping spirits. How sweet they had been — how considerate. Was it possible that she would never again see Tommy's sandled feet twinkling over those old floors in a merry



dance — hear the rounds of applause that always greeted her efforts? Would she never sit with Shu de Li in the window seat — listening to her whispered confidences? Were the Sunday night teas with Biddy by the fireplace over — forever!

She turned quickly and fled up the long flight of stairs that led to her room on the second floor. At the door she stopped again. A tattered scratch pad, suspended by a string from a crooked nail, beckoned to her. She took it down tenderly, smiling as her eyes traveled over the long list of names:

Elizabeth Perkins; City; returned at eleven fifteen.

Sarah Hampton; City; theatre. Home at twelve thirty  
P. M.

Dorothy Manners; City. Dinner dance. Home two  
A. M.

And then: Nancy Thurston, City; dance at the Frantic. Home — one A. M. But the one had been crossed out, and two written over it. Honest Nancy!

Her room too, seemed forsaken. Pictures had been stripped from the wall; Major, her mother, the girls and old Maumy lay in the bottom of the ark. The pretty cretonne curtains that Leigh had sent were down; the bureau bare of scarf.

From the west window a ray of sunshine fell upon a pile of books. Time had been when Caroline detested those scarred covers, but now she dropped down on the floor and took them in her lap tenderly. She wanted to look at them once



more, before she carried them downstairs to the library for next year's girls to puzzle and frown over. Each one, like the chapters of her life, marked an epoch.

But she had only half finished when the torn, penciled pages became unbearable. She picked up as many of the books as she could carry, and started downstairs. In the lower hall she met Susan Stirling.

"Why, Susan," she said, "I thought you had gone!"

"I had. But I came back. Train was three hours late. I—I thought I'd sort of like to wait here. I—I've loved this old place, you know—been happy here—"

Caroline nodded.

"I know," she said.

"I didn't realize it could look so glum—cleaned out."

"Glum?"

"Yes; 'spose you've never seen a glum house before. Well I have—many. When are you leaving?"

"To-morrow morning."

"Well, good-by again. Write sometimes. I've got to get back to the station. I left Dickie with a strange woman. Hope she won't walk off with him."

She had reached the front door when she turned.

"I say, Caroline, I was hoping I might see some one. I'm terribly short of money for the long



trip I've got to make — Boston, you know. You couldn't lend me ten dollars, could you? Pay you back as soon as I reach home."

Caroline's low laugh echoed through the empty hall.

"I am not any too flush myself, Susan," she said.

"But your journey is short — only two nights out."

Caroline reached for a hidden pocket and brought forth a purse.

"Sure ten's enough?" she asked.

"Oh, I could use fifteen, but —"

"Here it is. I can borrow from Mayre."

"Yes, of course. One always *can* borrow. Such a comfort. Thanks a lot, old dear. I shan't forget to send it back. Come East some day. Here's hoping!"

She put out her firm white hand. Caroline pressed it warmly. The door slammed. Susan, too, was numbered with the past.

Caroline went back to her room, finished her packing, closed and locked the bulging ark. She wondered if it had ever been so stuffed before — if, in those long-ago Briarly days its dainty trays were desecrated with the medley it now held. She thought not. She could scarcely picture her lady mother stowing linen with lingerie; bedding with window drapes, but — times had changed.

She was to dine at seven o'clock with Mrs. Mackintosh and her family. There were yet two hours to spare.



She found herself striking off toward the campus presently, though there was no reason why she should choose its deserted walks. Habit, perhaps, or, like poor Susan, "because she loved it. She had been so happy there."

As she walked, persistent memories stalked beside her; ghosts of other days. Here was the hotel where Biddy had first bumped into her. Her heart bounded as she passed the portal. She could almost hear his merry,

"So, then, it's up with the Blue and Gold — down with  
the Red,  
California's out for a victory."

Then his irresistible whistle ending with:

"Like our friend, Mr. Jonah, Stanford's team will be found  
In the tummy of the Golden Bear."

Dear old Biddy! What a good pal he had been. She recalled the visit she had made to his home — a moonlight ride along the sea, and her face flushed.

As she passed his fraternity house, somber and forsaken in the late afternoon sunshine, she was reminded of an amusing incident that had happened there. It was at a Nickel Crawl dance. They had gone from house to house, laughing and joking, care-free and altogether happy. In the hall, a youth had stopped them and after a hasty introduction, asked Biddy for one of her dances. Biddy had glanced up. "From the Farm?" he asked. The youth nodded.



Courtesy between the two colleges demanded that Biddy grant the request. He held out his hand for the lad's overcoat, holding it while she whirled off with him.

She had come back to find Biddy in a white heat. The overcoat lay crumpled on the hall table.

"What's the matter?" she asked, as they moved toward the next house.

She laughed now as she recalled his answer:

"That smart young guy wasn't from the Farm. He's a Frosh. Fine ducking he'll get for his impertinence!"

The Glade was deserted, but the birds and gurgling brook were company enough. Caroline walked on — through the campus and out toward the hills.

She was a little spent when she reached the big "C" and dropped down to rest.

For a long time she sat there, basking in the warm sunshine, digging her heels in the soft moist earth, plucking at the tangled weeds and grasses. Thinking — thinking —

Often she lifted her head and gazed at the peaceful city nestling between hills and sea. She was glad to have her last view of it alone — to ponder on all that it had meant to her.

The sun dropped lower in the west. Still she sat thinking of her first days there — of old pleasure — old pain. She could see the stately Library building, and a certain window on the fourth floor — aflame now, from the red sky in



the west. That window sent a chill to her heart — and yet, the small darkly curtained room beyond had made its contribution: there she had learned patience, justice — sympathy.

She went back over the years, and taking them up, one by one, held them to her heart. What was she to do with them: these precious, profitable years her father had sacrificed to give her? If she could only distill them into usefulness, return to her beloved Alma Mater gift for gift — prove herself worthy of its bounty —

The thought rose like a prayer as she looked out into the thickening twilight. Below, at the foot of the narrow path that led to town, the lights in Mrs. Mackintosh's dining room gleamed friendlily.

With a sigh half-sad, half-glad, she started toward them.

THE END























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